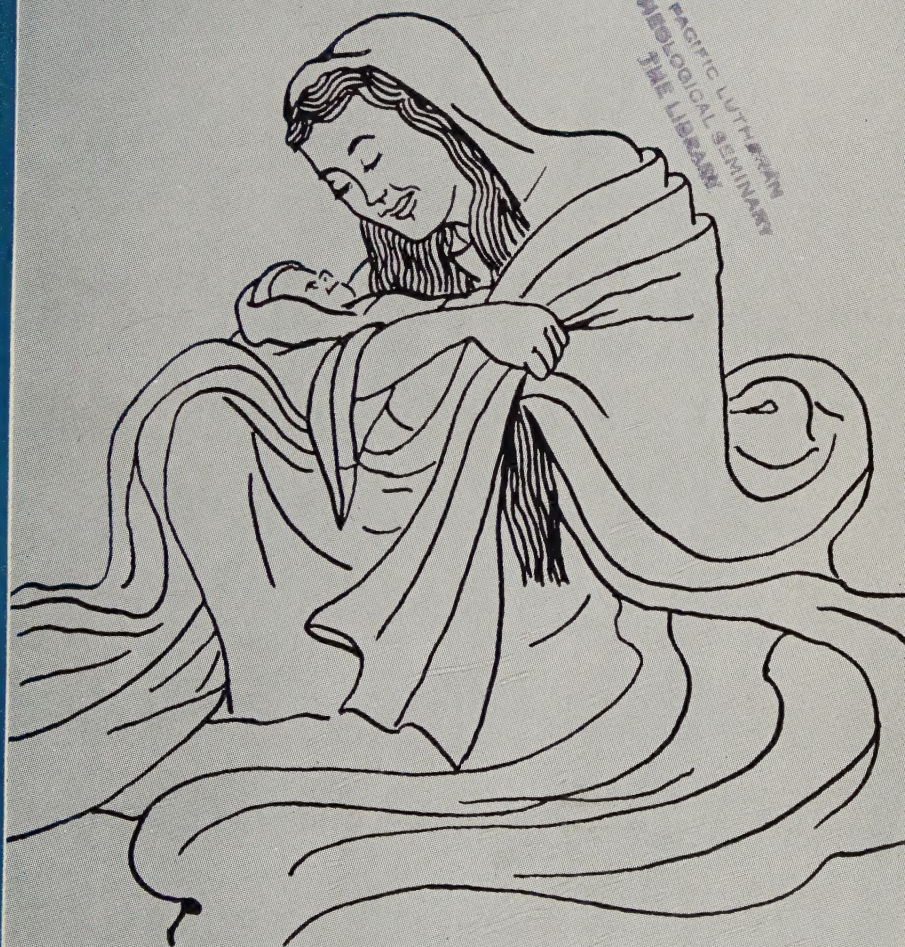


THE LUTHER LEAGUE OF AMERICA

High Ideals



EPIPHANY

O God who on this day by the leading of
a star didst reveal thine only-begotten
Son to the Gentiles:

Mercifully grant that we, who know
thee now by faith, may be brought to
contemplate the beauty of thy Majesty;
through the same Thy Son, Jesus Christ
our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with
thee and the Holy Ghost, one God,
world without end. Amen.

High Ideals

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RUTH SHAFFER
Subscriptions

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT FOR ALL SUBSCRIBERS

LLA's quarterly topics magazine, High Ideals, will cease publication with the Spring 1960 issue. The Executive Board of the ULCA has given approval for LLA's use of a new publication, Youth Programs 1960-61 published by the Joint Youth Publication Council. This annual will be available from the LLA office in June. As a substitute or replacement of High Ideals, the new topics annual will be LLA's chief program material for congregational leagues.

UNCOMPLETED SUBSCRIPTIONS to High Ideals will be refunded with a choice of three methods: (a) credit toward purchase of a copy of Youth Programs, (b) credit toward purchase of LLA literature, including LUTHER LIFE, or (c) refund in postage stamps.

LLA WILL CONTACT EACH SUBSCRIBER BY LETTER WELL IN ADVANCE OF SUMMER PROGRAMMING TO ARRANGE FOR YOUR CHOICE OF REFUND. PLEASE DO NOT WRITE LLA!

after Christmas

by Charles Sardeson

... this is what we mean by "Epiphany"

THE other day I walked into a living room and noticed something I had already seen hundreds of times before. On one wall there was a fireplace which was the center of the room for most of the furniture was arranged facing the fireplace. At the moment, however, there was no one in the room. The room stood empty, waiting. Someone had laid logs and kindling in the hearth; everything was set.

All this sort of thing I had seen before, now I watched as a pageant began to unfold. A few people entered. As they took seats facing the fireplace the host stooped, match in hand, and lit the fire. Soon the blaze caught and did what a fire always does in a hearth, it caught the eye and the attention of everyone in the room. Several people who were still standing off a bit came closer. As the fire grew, it sent off its light and warmth, filling the room, dancing on the polished brass, quieting the conversations. Then a third thing happened which I have never known to fail when a fire has been lit in a hearth. Someone in the room confessed, "I love a fire." Everyone agreed. There is something about a crackling blaze that puts people in a calmer mind and draws them together. It is hard to be a stranger before an open fire.

Now, that is exactly the way I feel about the Epiphany. You know, of course, that the Bible is made up of everyday events in the lives of God's people written down to be a help and inspiration for all ages with such a spirit in them that we all know how very much God is a part of life. Why is it not perfectly fair then, to take moments of every day and say they are just like the Bible in their own way, and in their own power to suggest things high and holy.

On Christmas God lit a fire in the world, not only in the heavens, but down on earth, too, in the midst of that great room where people live. Have you ever noticed that almost every artist who has ever turned his hand to the Christmas story has had to fall back on lighting effects to make his purpose clear on the canvas. From the heart of the manger there is a light that touches and transforms the faces of all those who stand nearby watching. Every face must be focused on that light, with none ever shining brighter than the light in the manger. If the picture is skillfully drawn, our eye is always caught first by the manger or the infant at the center, then it runs along the rays of the light to the faces of those round about and finally beyond the faces to the frame of the picture.

The world was a cold and drafty room where people waited anxiously hopefully, for someone to light a fire in the hearth. God did. It was Christmas. The light was struck, the blaze rose up. Wise men saw it in the East, shepherds on their hill, kings on their thrones. Christmas, like any fire in a room, gathered people to it, then cast light on their faces and touched them with a warm glow.

This is what we mean by the Epiphany. It is gathering about the flame of Christmas to watch it burn and spread and light the room, bringing forth from us adoring and wonderful words of praise, breathing its quietness on our spirits. In the light of Epiphany we are no longer strangers before the hearth and heart of God. We have become companions in a secure fellowship of light.

Epiphany begins January 6. According to tradition that is the moment when the Magi arrived after their long trek across the wilderness. They were the first recorded Gentiles to pay homage and to take their places before the transforming nature of Christ.

II

After you see that a fire is really going, you settle back and discover two things happening. You find yourself following the lines of light as they leap out striking this and that object. And you notice, also, how faces are changed in the glow.

Epiphany is the season for proclaiming the glory and majesty of the Light of God, Jesus Christ. Let us follow that Light as it springs out of the stable and across the countryside, flashing here and there against people living in the world, growing constantly in intensity and wonder.

The Epiphany Gospel lesson in Matthew which tells of the arrival of the wise men with their marvelous and generous gifts is filled with all sorts of hints about the future. Can you see the light of the manger flashing against the gold, highlighting the frankincense, casting strange shadows from the myrrh?

Then out the manger door the light streams and on to the high road, dashing down to Egypt, lighting a path in a strange land, spreading slowly back to the little village of Nazareth tucked among the hills of Galilee where it settled for a while roaming the hills, lighting the bleached earth, outlining the narrow streets.

The light begins to move again in our lesson for the first Sunday after the Epiphany. We read: "Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover and when he was twelve years old. . . ." There you catch the light again lingering on the faces of the wise men in the Temple with the young lad questioning them and answering their own questions far better than they could themselves.

The Epiphany light grows brighter year by year in the person of Jesus Christ. The second Sunday after Epiphany takes us twelve miles and eighteen years from the scene in Jerusalem. The brilliancy of the moment is dazzling. The manger has given way to the carpenter's shop, and that to the temple in Jerusalem. Now the scene is a marriage feast. What a lovely thing that is to light up with rays of holiness. There was just one dark shadow in the otherwise perfect day. The bridegroom had run out of wine. What an awful moment for any man who was trying to show himself at his very best, not only for the sake of his bride, but also for all their friends. Then, in God's own wonderful way the very best wine was presented and the moment was saved. The bridegroom in bewildered amazement knew something more than wine had entered the rejoicing for his marriage. Writing of it later John put the whole truth very simply. "This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed."

Turn now to the Gospel lesson for the third week and see how the light has gathered, how boldly it illuminates the lives of people. Coming down from the mountain the multitude gathered, drawn to the light of God. A leper was cleansed. What a gloriously bright thing to happen! Pushing right in upon that moment is a centurion pleading for his servant "lying paralyzed at home in

terrible distress." His own great faith met with ready response in the heart and might of Jesus: "Truly I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such faith. Many will come from east and west to sit at table with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob," men just like this centurion, "while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness; . . ."

Unfortunately the Epiphany is not all light and joy. We have to admit that. There were some who turned their faces and their dark souls became a shade against the light. They suffered for it, just as men always do who turn away and deny the gifts of God and the compassion of Christ.

Look on ahead. There were moments when the sky grew dark even for the disciples. The moment, for instance, as the Gospel for the fourth Sunday reminds us, when the disciples and Jesus were out in their boat. The wind struck and the waves mounted to threatening proportions. The human defenses of bravery and patience snapped, panicking disciples—normal people—in the face of such dark signs on the face of all nature.

But again Jesus was sufficient. He spoke to the disciples admonishing them to be calm and trusting. Then the storm broke. Whether it was the waves dying suddenly, or the waves of their own fear breaking against the jutting shore line of a renewed faith does not really matter. It was a bright new moment in their discipleship and in their awareness of the goodness and care of God for their lives.

Even their minds caught the new rays of light which Jesus brought into the world. On the fifth Sunday the Gospel is that story of infinite patience and understanding on the part of God as he works his way among men, letting the weeds and the good grain grow together, knowing the right moment will come for separating the weeds and the wheat. Matthew records it: "I will tell the reapers. Gather the weeds first and bind them into bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn."

We grow so impatient, wanting Right to triumph in the very first round, or inning, or what have you. God never seems to be in a hurry. He takes his time in light of his great wisdom and knows how to use every growing moment for his own purposes. How we need to understand, to be patient and persistent and trustful as we live from day to day letting God's sun do its work in his own ordered seasons. If we had our way we would force everything into a sort of incubator world, but God knows there are some things that simply cannot be rushed. We need to see clearly as he sees using Jesus Christ as our light.

Finally, to underline this very truth, the Gospel for the sixth Sunday after the Epiphany sends us back to one of the great moments of the New Testament, to the story of the transfiguration. Epiphany is brought into focus. The fire which began as a spark in the hearth has now filled the whole room. The flickering light of Bethlehem has reached out to the mountain where the light of God and the light of one man become indistinguishable. Surely the Eternal is in *this* event, in *this* world, in *this* room where you and I live our lives. The life of Jesus with his teaching, healing, many wonderful works, and with his power to make disciples, is our way of knowing it. And to make a witness to all this truth is the one great purpose of the Epiphany season.

III

Now comes the real test. If we are to be witnesses, we cannot do it simply by standing and looking at a light which has crossed centuries. It must shine on *our* faces, and in *our* spirits, making each of us an Epiphany light. At the very beginning of this article I mentioned how something happens to people when they come before a fire in the hearth. They are no longer strangers. They become

quiet with a binding spirit of kinship and security born out of the warmth and glow of the fire. The same light is on every face. That is Epiphany at its best. Here is the time for announcing the great fellowship of Christian living with peace and strength and love at the heart of it.

It is not by accident that the Epistle lessons for the Season are all about love and grace and "singing together in Psalms and hymns" even with strangers.

The room of this earth is a cold place before the flame appears in the hearth and people are likely to be hesitant and aloof and restrained with one another. The fire changes that. So does Christmas change the world. And the Season that follows is taking a measure of the rays that stream out of that most blessed moment. These are the days when we sing again:

"O'er this our home of darkness Thy rays are streaming now;
The shadows flee before thee, The world's true light art thou."

PRESENTATION POINTERS

Epiphany was celebrated and emphasized in the Early Christian Church far more than the birth of Christ or Christmas itself. Now is a good time to renew our understanding of this part of the Church year in worship and discussion.

The article is divided into three parts. These could be presented by three speakers in one program or as three separate meditations for separate worship or topic presentations. Be sure to use the Propers for Epiphany and the successive Sundays after Epiphany for each of your worship services. These are found in the front of either the CSB or the SBH. Using these leaguers will see more clearly the significance of Epiphany, the revelation of Christ to the Gentiles and God's purpose that we should witness to that light, that revelation. Also the reading of the assigned Scriptures for the season will point out the harmony of the Propers themselves and will aid in understanding the second part of the topic where the author discusses the Gospel lessons.

An outline for worship might be as follows:

Hymn
Introit
Gloria Patri
Collect
Lesson
Epistle
Gradual
Gospel
Hymn
Meditation
Prayer and Lord's Prayer
Hymn

Hymns listed under "Epiphany" in the CSB and SBH should be selected.

Good discussion can be worked up under the third part of the topic. "How do we witness" is a very important question and one that should be well-discussed. Christians don't win people to Christ by grabbing them by their lapels and

shouting "You're A Sinner!" or by purely intellectual conversation. But how, then, do we? What are the everyday situations in which we can witness? Discuss how sharing, listening, talking, understanding, worshipping, praying are parts of witnessing. "How Do We Witness" depends sometimes on "To Whom Do We Witness?" What program for evangelism has your league planned? Are you approaching only lapsed members or also young people who are unchurched? How many non-Lutherans have you invited? How many non-Protestants? Have any of your leaguers ever witnessed to a Jew? What are the obligations of the Christian Church to the Jews? To the Negroes? To the Juvenile Delinquents and young people from the lower income brackets? Some critics of the Church say that the Church is more interested in being a "success" than it is in evangelizing, introducing the Gospel to the non-Christian. Do you believe the Church sees the problems of our society clearly today? Is the Church offering effective answers to these problems? (Be specific!) (Think about alcoholism, juvenile delinquency, love of money and success, divorce, slums, segregation, hatred of the Jew) Do you think your congregation needs enlightenment on any important matters of Christian practice? What can your group do about it?

a guide to the
forming of
christian
cell groups

10 cents

LLA, 2900 Queen Lane, Phila., Pa.

TIME TO SPEND

by the LLA Recreation Committee

Most of the parts in this play are spoken or read from off stage. If a curtain is being used, it should be closed with an altar behind it. The characters who read parts are as follows: Boy 1—a good speaking voice; Boy 2—average voice; and Girl 1—good speaking voice with much expression; Girl 2—average voice. Two additional boys and three girls will be needed to portray parts in front of the curtain.

At the beginning of the play the curtain is closed and the front of the stage is lighted by spots or other lights to draw attention to the stage. The voice then comes from behind the curtain; a microphone should be used, if possible.

BOY: 1: The Federal Bureau of Investigation this year reports a rise in crime.

The New York Times Magazine reports

"In the shabby back streets of West Harlem, two youths were recently killed because of gang warfare—one, a 16 year old member of the Assassins, allegedly by a member of a rival gang, the Sinners." The question was asked of the boys in the Assassins gang, "Do you kids enjoy rumbling?" The answer, "No . . . Probably not . . . It's like a habit."

Your hometown newspaper, today . . . (put the real date here)

Headline—Youth killed in gangland war

Headline—Boys arrested for disturbing the peace

Boy 2: Rumble

GIRL 1: Kicks

GIRL 2: Thrills

BOY 1: These are the words of our generation.

BOY 2: Beat

GIRL 1: Lost

BOY 1: Anxious

BOY 2: Silent

GIRL 2: Concerned

BOY 1: No matter what the label, the package is still us—The youth of today.

GIRL 1: We stand in a world which measures success by the number of buttons one has to push.

BOY 1: Now we save time, but . . .

GIRL 2: What can I do tonight?

BOY 2: Come on fellows, let's do something for kicks!

BOY 1: Time . . . Time . . . Time . . . Time to spend; time to waste; time to use. And so we seek a means of employing our leisure time.

BOY 2: Exercise to strengthen our bodies.

GIRL 1: Activities to refresh our minds.

BOY 2: Experiences to refresh, strengthen, and mature our spiritual life.

BOY 1: But the child—youth—plays recklessly with its new toy—leisure time. Under this new freedom lies man's deepest sin—that of seeking self-serving pleasure.

GIRL 2: But are these things we read about really recreation?

BOY 2: Yes, to the world, they are.

GIRL 2: And to the Christian—to the leaguer?

BOY 1: The Christian, if he is truly one, realizes God's concern with his total life . . . Recreation, while it is a human necessity, must be seen

by the Christian in its proper place in the total Christian life. Christian Recreation grows out of our response to the love of God! Recreation for the Christian is one of many means to the end of the Christian life, and not merely an end in itself. Christian Recreation is refreshing and creative. It can act as a uniting force among people and not merely as a means to the individual satisfaction.

GIRL 2: (Walks out from behind the curtains with a tennis racket, and takes a position down stage at stage left.)

Well, our league is really on the ball. Our young people know all about recreation . . . tennis, softball, party games . . . You know!

BOY 1: Yes, I know. But have you ever thought of other types of Christian Recreation—recreation promoting fellowship.

(A boy walks on stage with his nose in a book. He takes a position at stage right about three feet back farther than Girl 2.)

GIRL 1: A bookworm? Well, maybe . . . but this too can be recreation. Here the mind can be stimulated, relaxed, and refreshed. This is truly recreation that re-creates.

(A girl walks on stage and acts out a few lines to the audience; then assumes a position at stage left about six feet behind Girl 2 and more center stage.)

BOY 2: Drama can be used effectively in the presentation of topics and in worship services. This type of presentation can have a tremendous impact on young people.

(Two girls and a boy come out to stage right about six feet behind the boy with the book and more stage center. They form a friendship circle and pray the last portion of the Lord's Prayer.)

GIRL 1: "Where two or three are gathered together . . ." This too can be recreation. Recreation promoting a deeper fellowship between man and man, and God and man.

BOY 1: Time . . . Time . . . Time . . . Time to spend. Time to waste. Time to use. Recreation is a human necessity . . . But what shall it be?

BOY 2: Recreation . . . The Assassins, alone . . . against the world.

(Curtains open to reveal the altar behind them. The four girls and two boys on the stage come to center stage and form a friendship circle and bow their heads. The lights go out and only the altar should be illuminated with a cross above the altar visible above the group on stage.)

GIRL 1: or Christian Recreation . . . growing out of our response to God's love.

BOY 2: promoting Christian maturity.

GIRL 1: promoting a deeper fellowship between man and man, and God and man.

(The curtain closes and the group on stage exits off at stage left.)

This play can serve as an introduction to or reminder of the real definition of Recreation. Review the program of recreation currently planned for your league. Does it show a concern for promoting Christian maturity and deeper relationships between man and man, man and God? Discuss the "Rumble, Kicks, Thrills," thoughtfully considering why young people seek this kind of

individual and group enjoyment. An article called "So What" concerning juvenile delinquency appearing in the January LUTHER LIFE could serve as background reading for intelligent discussion of this point. Who gives us the time we have to spend? To whom are we responsible for how we spend our time? What part does Recreation play in a Christian's life?



PROBLEMS!

by Earl T. Knaus

WORSHIP OUTLINE

HYMN: "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past"
 VESPERS VERSICLES (from the Vespers service;
 read responsively)
 PSALM 46
 GLORIA PATRI (read responsively)
 LESSON: Matthew 4:1-11
 HYMN: "In the Hour of Trial"
 CANTICLE: The Magnificat: (from the Vespers
 Service; read responsively)
 PRAYERS
 HYMN: "Onward, Christian Soldiers"

SUGGESTIONS TO LEADER

Ideas for discussion and a quiz are woven into the topic material. Read the topic carefully, then assign portions well in advance of presentation. Be sure to provide pencils and paper, or copies of High Ideals containing the quiz, for the group. The topic can lead to lively discussion if the presentation is made with careful preparation. The group should be encouraged to discuss their own problems and the way in which they handle them.

Nancy Spears had a problem. She was shy and she felt that people didn't like her very much. She was the tallest girl in her class, and none of the boys ever walked home with her or teased her in that

special way they teased the girls they liked. Instead, they stood off and yelled "beanpole" whenever she passed.

"If only," Nancy thought, "if only there were some magic medicine I could take to make me shrink."*

Nancy was not the only one with a problem. Almost everyone in her class worried about something. And those young people were no different from people everywhere, anytime. Just about everybody has problems, whether they are six or 60, in Burma or Florida. Naturally, there are all kinds of problems, and not everybody has the same number or even the same kind. But if everyone in your Luther League were to make a list of his problems, you would probably find that many of them were almost alike. Start your program by asking everybody to make just such a list and then compare

*This story, along with the others found in this article, is taken from the Junior Life Adjustment Booklet *Your Problems: How to Handle Them*, by Hermann H. Remmers and Robert H. Bauernfeind.

lists to see what difficulties the group has in common.

What do you do?

The things we do to handle our problems and to find solutions, as well as the problems themselves, are also pretty much alike. After the topic has been introduced, give the following.* If there are not enough copies of High Ideals for everyone to have a copy of the quiz, or if it is not possible to duplicate copies for everyone, provide paper and pencils for members of the group. Encourage the group to discuss their answers and share their thoughts on the quiz questions.

It should be pointed out when the quiz is introduced that as we mature we set up ways of handling the problems of living. Some of these methods we probably copied from other people and adapted to our own purposes. Other ways we discovered by accident. We put them into practice because we found them effective methods of gaining what we desired. The quiz will show how many of these common methods of handling problems we use now, and how many we used to apply.

Each question should be read carefully. You can check the ones you can answer YES at present and mark and X at each question you would have answered YES in younger years.

The use of these ways of meeting problems depends largely on the particular circumstances of the problem. These methods exert a good or bad influence on us according to how we balance them with better ways. Some of them have advantages over others, and some we discard or change as we grow. The group can discuss these matters when they have answered the questions and thought a little about them.**

What are my ways of meeting problems?

1. Do I examine a personal problem very frankly, objectively, trying to see it

**This quiz is found on page 28 of *Better Ways of Growing Up* by Crawford and Woodward. Chapter two is good background for this topic.

clearly for what it really is, then deal with it to the best of my ability?

2. When I am unable to reach a goal I had set for myself, do I set a new goal that I can attain, and then strive to gain it?

3. When I desire something that secretly feel is not as good as I ought to want, do I try to adorn this "poorer" thing with special values that make it appear more desirable to me?

4. Do I try to defend the things I strive for by assigning "good" reasons for doing them, beyond my own personal reasons?

5. Do I tend to overemphasize a good characteristic to balance out a point that seems poorer to me?

6. Do I daydream over a personal problem—thinking how different things might be, or will be some fair day—rather than meeting the problem squarely and doing something about it now?

7. Do I resort to crying, angry outbursts, or pouting when things go wrong for me?

8. Do I like to think that I face the same difficulties and solve them in the same way that another person I greatly admire has managed these problems?

9. Do I try to forget problems that seem too unpleasant to bear, forcing them out of my conscious thoughts?

10. Do I usually meet a difficult situation by reacting immediately in whatever way I feel deep inside me about the matter at that moment?

11. When I must decide between two different ways of solving a difficult personal problem, do I carefully think through both ways, then go ahead in the way I feel is best for everyone concerned—without vaguely feeling that I was not doing right?

Solving problems

One day Paul Lee came to school looking mad as a hornet. "That brother of mine!" blurted Paul. "He got into my room this morning and broke my model airplanes. It's not the first time, either. 'Boy! You do have a problem,' com-

mented Frank. "What are you going to do about it?"

Here is a typical problem, maybe very similar to one you have had. What can be done about it? Well, to start with, you have to be sure of what the problem is. Get the facts! Guard against deceiving yourself about what the problem really is. If you can figure out *why* you have the problem, that will go a long ways towards determining what is your problem. Once you have actually located the problem you can begin to list possible solutions. Try to think of as many as you can, both good and bad, new and used solutions. As you make this list compare and analyze these in the light of your convictions and how they effect other people. Finally, make a decision and get to work on it. Don't delay your decision, but don't act hastily and without being convinced that you have a solution that you can conscientiously carry through for the good of all concerned.

These three steps can be your guide to problem solving:

1. Get the facts straight, especially the *why's* and *wherefore's*.
2. List and consider possible ways of handling the situation.
3. Conscientiously decide, and lovingly work it out.

What would you do?

Some studies have been made of the kind of things that bother young people. They show that a great many worry about the same things, want the same things, and get angry about the same things. Those problems that are found to be important to most concern your health, getting along with other people, you and your school, problems about yourself, and you and your home. Suppose we look at examples of these problems and try to determine in each case how to proceed towards solving them.

If you would like to play "private detective," "social caseworker," or "psychoanalyst" each of the following cases can be assigned *at least* a week ahead of time to members of the group for their consideration and study. When the pro-

gram is presented those assigned a case can report. In this report they can sketch in the details, using the three steps for problem solution listed above. They might point out, or even make up, facts that are needed for fuller studies of the case, and give a solution as they see it, with suggestions on how that solution might best be worked out. The whole group could then discuss the case to see if anyone else has suggestions, questions, or comments. Urge members of the group to share their experiences with similar problems and how they found a solution for themselves, and the difficulties and success they had in working it out.

Let us start with the kind of problem you have with yourself. There was the case of Harold Schultz who got mad too much. For example, one day in school Harold had been trying to draw a figure with a compass. The figure just wouldn't come out right. After several tries, Harold became impatient and angry and threw the paper on the floor along with the compass and a jar of paste. The paste went all over the aisle, and his teacher had to make him clean it up. When his classmates laughed at him, Harold felt like a baby! He was very embarrassed about the whole thing, and wondered to himself, "What makes me do things like that, anyway? Other people don't seem to get mad as easily as I do." Well, what would you do if you had this problem? Can you think of other examples of personal problems, perhaps your own, and what you can do about it?

If your health is bad that can be a cause of great difficulty. Linda McDade was a person with such a problem. The way she felt one recess time is a good example. At 10 o'clock sharp the girls of her class trooped out to the playground and divided up into two teams for volleyball. But Linda didn't go. In spite of the nice weather she felt tired and chilly. She even had a slight headache. Linda sat down on a bench by herself.

"Aren't you going to play, Linda?" one of the girls called.

"Oh, leave her alone," another said, "Linda never wants to do anything."

Maybe Linda is not taking care of herself by getting the proper rest and food. She may really have good physical health, but is too shy for some reason to join in with her group. But if these are not the case, what would you do in such a situation? If they are the explanations, how would you proceed?

Another common problem young people have is trouble at home. For example, one Sunday Pete Johnson's father was taking his family to the museum. Mike Rayburn, Pete's best friend, went along. Mike had a wonderful time looking at all the exhibits, seeing how steel was made, and going down into the model coal mine. But at home that evening Mike was unusually quiet. When his mother asked him about it, he finally said, "Well, I wish Dad were home more and could spend Sundays with us the way Pete's father does."

Mike's father was a salesman and sometimes he was away from home a week at a time. When Mike's father came home this time the whole family talked about their problem. Mike learned that his father had to stay at a hotel all by himself when he was away from home. He had to eat alone and missed being with his family. Mike also found out that his mother missed having his father around. Realizing all this didn't solve the problem, but it helped. What would you do in Mike's place? What kind of problems do you have at home and what are you doing about them?

Most people have problems about getting along with others. Part of the reason we have difficulties making friends is because we may not have settled the problems we have already talked about: Problems about ourselves, problems at home, and problems of health.

If we can solve some of our more personal problems it will help us get along with others. Take the cases of Chuck and Cliff. Chuck could always think of funny things to say. But very often his fun was at the expense of some other person. He thought he could say something funny at any time, about anything. But people didn't like a steady

diet of Chuck's jokes. They wanted to be serious about serious things, like illness or a difficult school problem. Cliff's problem seems almost opposite to the one Chuck had. Cliff was afraid to start talking to people he didn't know very well. He was tongue-tied and formal. All Cliff could think of was how stupid everybody must have thought he was. What would you do about the problems of Chuck and Cliff? Do you think their problems are pretty much alike underneath, because they were thinking too much about themselves instead of what other people might be interested in?

Another big problem is getting along in school. Instead of giving a case here to illustrate the problem, consider the following questions. Perhaps a member or two of your group could be assigned these questions for study and report back to your group for a discussion.

1. Why is it important for you to get to school?
2. Why are you required to take certain subjects, even though you may not like them, or be very good in them?
3. How can you overcome fear and anxiety about tests?
4. What can you do to improve your study habits?
5. What can you do to get along better with your teachers and classmates?

"Come unto me . . .

. . . All ye that labor and are heavy laden," said Christ. He knows our problems and difficulties because he lived on this earth and suffered all things that make life hard for men. Study his temptations and see how he was faced with difficulties and how he had to consider different solutions and finally make his decision and stuck to it. Or ponder the scene in the Garden of Gethsemane where he prayed to be relieved from the terrible burden of crucifixion, but finally accepted it as the thing he must do and carried through with it for all of its terror and hurt.

Because Christ won a victory over the problems of life, not just for himself

but for all of mankind, he can invite us to himself and give us help when we need it.

Whatever else we do to handle our problems, and there are many things we can do, the greatest resource of all is in our Saviour who links us with the might

and power of God. And we can gain help also through Christ's church with its word and sacraments, its pastors and our friends in Christ. To all this we are privileged to turn and know that it is an inexhaustible source for the finding of God's will. ■

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CHALLENGE OF SERVICE

by Fred Krautwurst

A MEDITATION

Read Isaiah 6: 1-11

"I am of the opinion that my life belongs to God, and it is my privilege to do for him whatsoever I can. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle for me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I hold for a brief time. I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations."

Is this *your* voice? Is this your opinion? The Challenge of Service has been passed along since the beginning of time. Do you remember Noah and his challenge? Do you remember Moses and his? God set before them a Challenge of Service.

The reading from Isaiah was the familiar story of God's call to Isaiah. God set before him the challenge to go and preach and convert the people of Judah. God set up his Challenge of Service and Isaiah answered it. Will you answer *your* challenge?

God gave Amos a Challenge of Service. He was to preach to the people of Israel. Many of the Israelites had become wealthy and lazy. They oppressed the poor. Amos preached God's word to them and warned them that the time of Judgment was near. Amos answered his challenge; will you answer *yours*?

All of the biblical characters didn't answer the challenge immediately. Take Jonah for instance. Most people know the story but they don't know the facts behind it. Jonah lived in Jerusalem after the exile. This was a time when the Jews were narrow and bigoted toward the non-Jews. They were keeping their knowledge of God and His love to themselves. God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach to the people there. Instead of answering the call he prepared to flee to Tarshish, located in present-day Spain. He boarded a sailing ship headed for Tarshish. During the passage, God caused the sea to be extremely rough and dangerous. The men on the ship cast lots to determine who was the cause of this evil. The lot fell to Jonah. He told the sailors to cast him into the sea, which they did. Immediately the sea was quiet, and God prepared a great fish to swallow

Jonah. He made an altar in the belly of the fish and asked God's forgiveness. Seeing that Jonah was repentant, God caused the fish to vomit Jonah upon the dry land. Then God spoke to Jonah and renewed His challenge. Jonah answered the call and went to Nineveh to serve God. Will you answer *your* call?

God offered the toughest Challenge of Service to Jesus. He was to preach, teach, heal, and make the supreme sacrifice of His life, all of which He did willingly. Jesus died to save us from sin, and in forgiveness for earthly evil. Jesus answered His call by preaching that you have to love and serve God to be at one with Him. Jesus answered His Challenge of Service, will you answer *yours*?

Read St. Luke 14: 16-24

This parable, told by Jesus, illustrates God's call. The people who made excuses to not answer the invitation found out how wrong they were. Those that make excuses and refuse to answer God's Challenge of Service will not partake of God's rewards. Noah, Moses, Isaiah, Amos, Jonah, and Jesus answered their Challenge of Service; will you answer *yours*?

Prayer:

O most gracious Heavenly Father, instill in us the will to answer Thy Challenge of Service. Help us to spread Thy word and be active witness to Thy glory and active workers in Thy Kingdom. We ask this in the Name of our Dear Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

PRESENTATION POINTERS

This meditation was prepared originally for use as part of a program for Luther League evangelism. Use different leaguers for the reading of the scripture passage, the meditation itself, and the prayer. This program can teach us one of the most important obligations of our Christian faith: our obligation of SERVICE. We must serve God and our fellow man as our fathers have served and as those will serve who follow after us. Even though we may not do anything spectacular, we must build as much as we can upon what has been built by those in the past, so we may leave that much more for those in the future. How does the challenge of service come to us today? How can your league serve the ministry in your congregation? How can your league serve the one, holy Apostolic Church throughout the world? What excuses do people, young and old, find to avoid answering God's call? Are these really any different from the excuses used by the biblical people? Can we be Christians and not serve? Do servants suffer? Whom do we serve? Why should we serve?

WORSHIP OUTLINE

HYMN: Faith of our Fathers SBH 516

INTROIT: Thy word is a lamp unto my feet:
and a light unto my path

GLORIA PATRI

LESSON: Isaiah 55:1-5

EPISTLE: Ephesians 4:7-16

GOSPEL: John 15:1-11

HYMN: Take my life and let it be SBH 510

MEDITATION

PRAYER:

LORD'S PRAYER

HYMN: O Christians, Leagued Together SBH 567

O God our King, who hast called us through Jesus Christ to be kings and priests unto thee: teach us to bear one another's burdens and the burdens of the commonwealth. Open our eyes to see the woes of our land, the despair in the lives of many, and the deep and shameful wrongs that cry to be put right. Make us thy servants, giving us no rest or discharge until thou hast wrought this work of compassion, that generations yet unborn may praise thy Name. We ask this for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS YOUR WORSHIP?

LET'S LOOK BACK on a league meeting. The room is buzzing with fellows and girls chattering madly about last night's game.

"What excitement! I thought they had the game for sure when Robinson made that beauty of a shot."

"I'll say, and with only thirty seconds left to play!"

"Hey Janie, guess we'd better get started, hmm? Play the piano tonight?"

"Well, I just did last week, but if you insist—"

Chuck mumbles, "Two verses of 215." There is a mad scramble for books, and by the time everyone has found his place, Janie is already playing the "Amen."

"Scripture," Chuck announces, as if he were a conductor calling the next station. Then Tim stands, whizzes through the Bible reading all in one breath, and slumps down to sleep through Chuck's droning recitation of the topic. While this is going on, an amazing mixture of thoughts is racing through the leaguers' minds. . . .

. . . "Oh, I mustn't forget to ask Pastor Lynn about . . . , Does Jim ever look funny in that crew cut! . . . X times Y equals XY . . . Wonder if we'll go to Mim's afterwards . . . How long does this go on!"

Then finally everyone jumps up on, "We'll close with the Lord's Prayer."
". . . forever and ever, Amen."

When We Worship

How effective was that period of worship? Well, Chuck should have been better prepared, and the kids should have

been thinking about what they were singing, and—I guess we could do better.

That's true enough, but was it worship at all?

Sure it was. We sang hymns, and read the scripture lesson. There was a prayer—wasn't there? Of course it was worship.

Was it? What is worship?

Worship is a relationship so simple that it can be described as "talking with God." It is a wonderful thing to know that God does continually speak to us and that He wants us to speak to Him.

Were you ever with people for a long time without saying anything to them? Or thinking about them? It would be almost impossible unless, of course, you were so busy thinking about something else that you forgot they were there. God is always very near, and it is only when we are preoccupied with other things that we fail to respond to Him.

This should give you an idea why we must do better in our worship services and how we can go about it.

Christ has said, . . . "True worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." REMEMBER: The whole purpose of our worship is to draw us closer to God.

To find out how we can come closer to Him, let's follow Isaiah's very real experience of God's presence in his worship.

Read Isaiah 6:1-4

First, Isaiah saw God. We too must see Him. Although it is not easy to completely and reverently turn our thoughts to God, we have many helps in Christian

art, music and symbolism. Looking at paintings like *The Transfiguration* by Raphael, deVinci's *The Last Supper*, and the *Crucifixion* by Van Dyck, we are reminded of events in Christ's life. Our forms of worship allow us to join our voices in great hymns and chorales. We also lift our hearts to God in the same prayers and canticles of the liturgy of the Church that have been used for centuries by worshipping Christians.

Candles on the altar remind us that Christ is the Light of the World. When we look at the cross we truly see God, for "in this symbol is the whole of what God is like, and what we are like. It tells us of our sinfulness and of God's love and forgiveness. It points to Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. It recalls his resurrection and our hope of eternal life through Him." If we allow symbolism, art, music, and the liturgy to help us, and if we go to God in faith, knowing that He will be there, His presence becomes very real to us. We see God.

Read thoughtfully Isaiah 6:5

Second, Isaiah felt unworthy. No sooner have we seen God than we realize how unworthy we are. *God is all powerful*; we are weak. *God is all merciful*; we turn our backs on those who need help. *God is all wise*; we understand so little. *God is all forgiving*; we are always trying to get back at those who have hurt us. *God is all loving*; we are friends to those of our own little group. *God graciously gives*; we, always fighting for more for ourselves, fail to praise and thank Him for His goodness. When we have seen God, we realize how horribly we fail in what He has commanded us to do, and how miserably we fall short of His power, wisdom, and love. Then we fall before Him with the fervent prayer, "Father we are unworthy, forgive us our trespasses."

Read Isaiah 6:6-7

Third, Isaiah experienced God's forgiveness. At one time or another, we've all had to tell our Dad that we know we haven't measured up to what he has expected us to do or be. Feeling miserable

all over, our throats hot and dry, we manage to stammer.

"Dad, I'm awfully, awfully sorry." Then, instead of being furious with you, as he has every right to be; instead of giving you a well deserved punishment, he says,

"It's all right son, but you can do better, I know. Here, let me help." Then with a smile you start out again—together. When we have sincerely prayed, "Father we are unworthy," God through Christ Jesus does mercifully forgive us. He heals our sickness of guilt, inspires us to be like Him, and through His Holy Spirit gives us strength and courage to do better. We feel a wonderful lightness of heart and an overwhelming thankfulness and joy in knowing God's forgiveness.

Read Isaiah 6:8

Finally, after God had made Isaiah worthy and strong to go forth in His name, He called to him. Isaiah answered gladly. This is the fourth part of our worship experience.

How does God speak to us? First He opens our eyes, our ears, and our minds to the needs of those around us. Look! Your companion is discouraged; he needs your cheerful help. Listen! Argentina missions are calling to you. Think! Millions of God's children exist in hunger, disease and ignorance. Will you think of them when you choose a life work.

Then, through His written Word, the Bible, God tells us what He wants us to do and how He would have us live. In almost every line there is an urgent message for each of us.

He speaks:

"You must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."
(Matthew 5:48)

"Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity."
(I Timothy 4:12)

He asks

"And who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?" (I Chronicles 24:5b)

This is God's challenge to us. When we are brought closer to God, when we see Him, when we pray for His mercy on our unworthiness, when we feel the won-

derful healing strength of His forgiveness, when we listen to Him and give ourselves with happy, thankful hearts, we do truly worship.

PRESENTATION POINTERS

PURPOSE:

To understand what true worship is.

TO THE LEADER

The introduction may be dramatized. Through this little play, try to bring to their attention the things in your meetings that must be improved.

Look ahead to next week's program. Some of the hints to leaders may help you! Study both programs as a unit.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How does our league truly worship?
2. What are some times when you have especially felt God's presence?
3. In what ways could help like art, music and symbolism ever detract from worship?
4. What does it mean to feel unworthy?
5. How does God speak to us?
6. What is it about our worship that we must do better?
7. Do my actions show that I worship God?
8. How did Jesus worship? (Mark 1:35, Luke 4:16-21, John 17, Luke 22:41-44.)

THINGS TO DO

1. Next Sunday morning, observe carefully the parts of the worship service that illustrate the four steps of Isaiah's worship.
2. Make a poster with the question, "Do our worship services bring us closer to God?" at the top. Then list the four steps of Isaiah's worship below.
1. Do we see God?
2. Do we feel unworthy?
3. Do we know God's forgiveness?

4. Do we listen to him and answer joyfully?
3. Start collecting stories, poems, hymns, pictures and scripture passages to use in planning a service of your own next week.
4. In beginning this adventure in worship give God some of your time daily. Turn your thoughts to Him and pray, "Father what will you have me do today?" Then do it!

BIBLE READINGS

John 4:23-24
Psalm 51
Romans 11:33-36
Luke 11:1-4
Daniel 9:9
James 1:22-25
1 Samuel 3:8-19
1 Chronicles 16:23-29

OUTLINE

Call to worship: "O come let us worship the Lord!"
Hymn: "Thee We Adore" (281 CSB)
Topic: "Let's Do Better"
Hymn: "Take My Life and Let It Be Consecrated, Lord, To Thee" (382 CSB)
Offering
Prayer: O thou eternal God, speak to each of us the word that we need, and let the word abide with us until it has wrought in us thy holy will. Cleanse, quicken, and refresh our hearts, direct and increase our faith: and grant that we, by our worship at this time, may be enabled to see thee more clearly, to love thee more fully, and to serve thee more perfectly. Amen.
Silent Meditation: Amen.

YOUTH WORKERS' INSTITUTE

Last summer LLA trained adult workers with youth: congregational lay advisors, pastors, parish workers, directors of Christian education. In response to continued need and interest, three Institutes will be held in 1960.

Where: Chicago, Ill.; Newberry, S. C.; Allentown, Penna.

Additional information can be obtained from LLA

MISSIONS AROUND THE WORLD

The following is a summary of the "Missions Around the World" panel which was held at the LLA convention. Moderator was Dr. Ralph W. Loew, President of the Board of Foreign Missions, ULCA. Participants were:

Winston Bone, New Amsterdam, British Guiana
Melton Soko Clinton, Totota, Liberia, Africa
The Rev. Juan Cobrda, Argentina
The Rev. K. Devasahayam, Guntur, Andhra State, India
Tennyson Liu, Hong Kong
Erich Berendt, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
Miriam Eleazer Fisher, Concord, No. Carolina
Joyce Johnson Schenk, Minneapolis, Minn.
Fred Wedemeyer, New York, N. Y.
David Ziegler, Hanover, Pa.

BERENDT: Could you say something about the rising tide of nationalism and its effect on the younger churches?

DEVASAHAYAM: Despite constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion, the dominant faith, Hinduism, tends to be equated with true patriotism. Non Hindus are sometimes even considered foreigners. In face of this situation the Christian claim is met with hostility. When Christians tell others about Jesus Christ who is the way by whom and by no other all shall enter, non-Christians in India say: "We do not want your Christ with his claims. If at all, we want him as an addition to what we already have." Even so, there are "depth conversions" to Christian faith, conversions which are not superficial, but which have deep roots.

ELEAZER: What would you say is the greatest enemy to Christian faith in your particular country?

LIU: Being so near to the Chinese mainland, we have the obvious and very real enemy of Communism. But this is not the only enemy we have. We have another enemy which is just as powerful: Christians who do not live like Christians. They are enemies from within.

WEDEMEYER: I would like to ask this question of Juan. To whom does the Church of Argentina minister? I understand that there are many European immigrants in your country.

COBRDA: Yes, we minister to many of these immigrants. But this is not all we do. We try to serve all the people represented by Argentina's seventeen languages. We have a fine new seminary which helps us, and we are thankful for the support which the LLA has given this school.

SCHENK: No doubt you had many impressions of Americans before you came to this country. How many of these impressions have you changed?

CLINTON: I used to think that all people in America live in mansions and that all Americans are rich. One impression I still have to this day, how-

ever, is that you move around too much!

ZIEGLER: Most of you are not white-skinned. I would like to ask, therefore, what effect have American problems and conflicts over segregation had in your country?

HAMLET: When I answer I speak, of course, only for British Guiana. This is a very difficult question. Briefly put, the situation is considered "deplorable." It leads some of our countrymen to look at the Board of Foreign Missions of the ULCA as "self-contradictory and superficial." This is not true of all our people, however. Missions are indeed very much appreciated. Because of some resentment, we must not be led to give up the primary purpose of the Christian Church.

BERENDT: I would like to ask a similar question. What effect does the great variety in American denominationalism have on overseas churches?

HAMLET: This must be answered in two parts. Christians, on the one hand, are not too bothered. They consider all denominations just as Christians. On the other hand, denominationalism is a problem to the non-Christian and also to the Christian who is trying to witness to his brother. When the Christian points to certain weaknesses in non-Christian religions, he is often met with the remark that he should not try to hide the differences so obvious within the Christian Church, for instance the many images in the Roman Catholic Church and the fundamentalism in some Protestant Churches.

WEDEMEYER: We have heard much about the growing missionary zeal of non-Christian religions. How does this effect the younger churches?

DEVASAHAYAM: It has two effects, one on the established churches and the other on the missionary possibilities for Christianity in India. For example, there are anti-Christian sects who exist only for the purpose of criticizing the Christian scriptures—which they take at face value. The Old Testament is especially a problem in this respect since there are recorded many weaknesses of men. Also, purification rites have been established recently in the old religions specifically for receiving back converts from Christianity. But the Christian Church is meeting these challenges. Indeed, it is doing more than meeting them. The Christian Church of India fights back through "newspaper evangelism," whereby the false claims of the Anti-Christian sects are met and the proper understanding of the scriptures is stressed. Such articles appear in many daily newspapers. Also, we have open meetings in government buildings where anyone may attend. There we do much the same thing that we do in the newspapers. In India there are very, very few lapses of converted Christians back to other faiths.

BONE: In British Guiana the situation is different. There is a growing tendency to return to the old ways. Especially with the birth of India's independence, there has arisen a greater zeal for the Indian religions—also our religions—Islam and Hinduism. Some churches have had to be closed. Indeed this is our greatest enemy.

SHENK: Could you tell us something about the problems which you, as a school principal, face with your students?

CLINTON: We have great problems with the many language groups which are represented in our villages coming together in our school. We also have trouble with the girls. By that I mean they leave school too early, many because of pregnancy. Also, we have the problem that people in our country think that when a person reads and writes he no longer needs to work! Hence when the students come to our school they don't like to do

manual labor. But we require that each student bring a cutlass and hoe!

Then, too, we have a time trying to get the students to go to bed at 9:30.

ZIEGLER: I have a question on a different subject. Could you tell us about the requirements which you think are necessary for a missionary?

BONE: First of all he has to be a person who likes to work with people. Furthermore, he should be one who is not in the habit of making people conform to his own ideas, to what *he* thinks is right. He must be willing to learn about the local problems and then attempt to bring this around to a Christian situation.

HAMLET: I would add that a missionary must be on his guard against any kind of what we might call "cultural imperialism." And also—a fact which is very important—he must be willing to work in the mission situation so that eventually he will be able to give up even his own place and be replaced by leaders from the national church.

LIU: My answer is that a missionary should be the kind of person whom you like for your pastors and teachers. We like the kind of people you like. We don't like the kind of people you don't like.

BERENDT: Turning to a different area, could you say something about the problem of plural marriage as it is met by the church?

CLINTON: One thing you must understand is that plural marriages in our country are not for lust, but for simple practical reasons. The economic situation in our country tends to make it necessary for a man to have more than one wife, so that the farm work will get done. Furthermore, it is tradition in our country for families—who are not wealthy—to give their daughters in marriage to a wealthy man. It is a custom also, that the bigger a man's family, the more he will be honored at the time of his death. One other custom which has also supported plural marriages is that which requires a woman to abstain from sexual relations with her husband for 2 to 3 years after she has given birth to a female child, 4 years in the case of a male child. So you see that men in African tribal environments like to have more than one wife.

DR. LOEW: You can see the tremendous problem involved here. Think what would happen if a missionary, who came from a strict moralistic background went to Liberia to preach the Gospel of Christ. As missionaries they need to be understanding and not just shocked. This is why family evangelism must be emphasized. Here you see an example of the difficult problems which we face in this world situation, problems for which there are no simple answers. We need men and women who will be farsighted and creative enough to come to grips with these problems.

CLINTON: The solution which the Christian churches in Liberia have now settled upon is that a man who becomes Christian may keep his wives, but he may take no more.

ELEAZER: Could you tell us something about the young people in your churches and the role they play?

BONE: The Luther League in our country is extremely important. Its members are especially grasped by the Evangelistic spirit. They do not hesitate to invite non-Christian friends to their meetings. Admittedly these friends do not immediately come to worship services. But soon they do come to catechetical class and become Christians. The League is one of the main points of contact our churches have with Islam and Hinduism. For example, one league president recently told me that one-third of

his league at present is composed of people of these two non-Christian religions.

SHENK: I would like to switch around a previous question of mine. What wrong impressions do American young people have of *your* countries?

CLINTON: Well, for one thing, there are no tigers and snakes crawling all over the place like in your movies. I have been through all the most important jungles in Africa, and I have never been bitten by a snake. Besides your American automobiles kill many more people and are much more dangerous than any of our snakes.

LIU: Incidentally, all Chinese people are *not* cooks and laundrymen.

DEVASAHAYAM: American children have to be shown on the map that there are other Indians beside American Indians. One child once asked me if I wore War Paint!

WEDEMEYER: In conclusion, I would like to ask you about the mission of the Church—or is it missions?

DEVASAHAYAM: In following Jesus Christ we seek to save that which is lost. This is our one great *commission* which we have from our Lord Himself. In light of the commission, we have many *missions* all over the world.

PRESENTATION POINTERS

At the beginning of the program have leaguers write down their answers to the following questions: what are the greatest enemies to Christianity in foreign lands? What effects do you think American racial problems have in countries with young churches? What effect does patriotic national feeling have on younger churches in countries like India? What are the qualifications of a good missionary? Why do some African people permit the custom of a man having more than one wife? Where is Liberia? ("Africa" is not enough! Have the leaguers say *where* in Africa.) What is the definition of "Missions"? What school has LLA supported in South America? Is Christianity the only missionary religion in foreign countries? If not, name some others.

Select leaguers with good speaking voices to make up a panel of American and "foreign" students with signs identifying their countries. The answers to many of the questions above will be given by the participants as they assume the parts of the LLA panel. Run through the presentation ahead of time to be sure leaguers can pronounce all the words and names and so the program will work along smoothly. The panel moderator should introduce the participants before the presentation begins, giving their names and the countries they represent.

Read the definition of "Missions" in the LLA 5-Divisional pamphlet to refresh your league's understanding of this part of the Church's program. The new color filmstrip "Soko of the African Bush," the true story of Melton Soko Clinton, the panel participant, is now available from your S/S Missions Secretary. Order this in time for your panel program or for a separate Missions topic.

Discuss some of the questions asked at the

beginning of the program. Which questions were most often answered incorrectly or not at all? Discuss why this might be so. What is your main source of information about foreign missions? What plans can you make to improve your Lutheran League information file on missions? Check to see if one of the women's groups in your church subscribes to the *Foreign Missionary* magazine and make a point of looking in there for possible program helps. What misunderstandings that you have had were cleared up by the panel's answers? Read again Winston Bone's comments on the role of the Luther League in his country of British Guiana. How many non-Christian friends have your leaguers invited to meetings? How many non-Lutherans? Would you say that your league is "exclusively" Lutheran (that is, does it exclude or leave out everyone who's *not* Lutheran?) Does this mean that it's *Christian*? Is your league program planned so that you can bring the message of the Gospel to non-Christians and non-Lutherans as well as to young people who have gone through confirmation classes like yours? Discuss some of the problems mentioned by the panel that are faced by churches in other countries. How may they be connected to what the Church in the U. S. and Canada does in terms of segregation, division into many sects and denominations, efforts (or lack of efforts) to solve social problems like juvenile delinquency, poverty in slum areas, corruption in politics?

WORSHIP SUGGESTIONS

Hymn: CYH 267: In Christ there is no East or West.

Responsive Reading: Psalm 67.

Scripture: Matt. 28:16-20.

Hymn: CYH 84: From all that Dwell.

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DATING IS LEARNING

by Henry E. Horn

"AND THEY lived happily ever after." All bedtime stories are supposed to end like that,—if they don't they are subject to the censorship of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children. After all, though, what else would you expect? A lovely princess—a handsome prince, a castle, and just "doin' what comes naturally"! It's made to order.

So we think. What matter if prince and princess have just met over a golden apple, or at the end of a deep sleep? The future is assured. The moment that heaven itself declared for this particular couple has arrived. At least one can see more destiny in such stories than that which meets us by ear and eye in television, theater, and radio. In the latter, boy

and girl stumble into each others arms and the stars appear.

If this isn't enough to get our blood circulating, we can turn on a crooner, and to the accompaniment of lyrics too sultry for visual presentation, we can imagine ourselves into the most pleasurable reveries.

Brother Kinsey didn't investigate how many guys and gals are trying out the fairy story or the Hollywood technique on every chance acquaintance of the opposite sex, but if our experience is any indication, this seems to be normal procedure. With such excellent guidance in such matter, one would expect an awful lot of people to be living "happily ever after."

Yet the slick magazines that often hand out such rosy solutions of the sex problems are the very ones that reveal the lines in the foreheads of those who were tricked. The radio crooner encourages the most imaginative treatment of Jane or Dick, while the soap opera makes suds out of the tragedies of broken marriages. I suppose it's just a matter of who listens to what; but sometimes thinking people have to put both together.

"And from that time on, there was a first rate brawl." Bedtime stories would be truer to the fact if they ended this way. Perhaps, once upon a time all of the questions of life were settled when two people found in each other the object of their dreams, and settled down together. Now, you have perhaps a 50-50 chance of spending your days in an inescapable brawl. Marriage can be a little bit of heaven, but it can just as well be a little bit of hell and in such intimate personal living, there is no place to hide at all.

This is not meant to frighten the timid, but to put the brakes on the hasty. Marriage is not the main aim of life. It is just not true that the single life is either unbearable or lacking in all of the richness which human life should have. Our Lord never married, and there have been endless examples of Christian men and women who have worked out their love for their neighbor without the help of an intimate physical relationship like marriage. It would be a big step toward sanity if Christian young people realized that *they don't have to get married to find life's fullness.*

On the other hand, with the right partner who is eager to grow with you, marriage can be a kindergarten of Christian love. By trying to accept another as he or she is, without any preconceived idea of what the other might be reformed to be, yet with faith in what both can be together—Christian marriage can put depth in to that "happiness ever after."

The "happiness ever after" of the prince and princess that I always imagined, was that of two people gazing into each others eyes for the rest of life,

while a bunch of flunkies and varlets did all of the chores which were necessary to give the prince and princess enough leisure to gaze. Exciting? Yes, for a while rapturous; but soon, utterly boring. As long as the prince can stay away from his business, and the princess can prop up her drooping hair-do, it's all very wonderful; but what happens when they get tired? Then comes the real test of the ability of two people to love one another. Will she still love him when she knows that the smile was his line? And when he finds out that she is held together with wires, and delicately balanced straps, in each case, evidences of the absence of any common interests, contrasting hobbies or purposes for family living.

All of this underlines a terribly necessary requirement for a happy marriage: you've just got to know the person you're marrying, and be able to grow up together toward some high goal. Looking into one another's eyes wears out quickly if these eyes have not caught sight of something higher than each other to which both will look.

You may answer that all of this is so true, but where do you find a guy or doll that's just the right one with these qualities built in? The answer is, you don't! The stories and movies are crazy if they expect to dramatize how it all happens in life. First of all, qualities aren't built in a person. *They develop in his relation with other human beings*, and if you want *her*—you will have to try growing up together first, before you are sure that you want this thing for all of life.

This period of growing up together is called *courtship*, and in many ways it is a rugged one (with apologies to princess and movie actors). First, it's rugged because the person you have to do it with is not someone who has dropped in from heaven for the special purpose, but the pimply boy in the back row, or the giggly gal with the crazy hat.

A college teacher in Marriage used to start her courses by asking her girls to list the qualities they desired in an ideal date; later in the term she asked for the qualities in an ideal husband; finally she

asked for the qualities in an ideal father. Then she used to confront the girls with the fact that three separate and distinct men were described. Yet there is, alas, a connection between dates and husbands, and between husbands and fathers. Most of us hope that they will be connected in the same man; at least it happens that way often.

Once we see this, we may think that there's an awful lot of work to be done on that date to make him what we think he ought to be—and it could be that he might think the same thing. But courtship won't last long if we go to work on each other with a chisel like a sculptor on a block of marble. Someone is going to get hurt! And the truth is that we don't marry people to reform them. That takes an awful lot of self righteousness to set oneself up as reformer—enough to make yourself a pretty poor risk as a life-mate. No wonder the other is driven to drink.

No, we seek to know each other as we really are. Even this is an exciting business, because as another opens up her heart and mind to us, it somehow teaches us what we are, and we begin to find depths of our own lives responding in a way that almost (and it should) frightens us. The danger is always that the strange excitement comes first, and is usually stimulated by a real sexual attraction—and the really deep understandings come later when we have revealed ourselves at our worst.

We must somehow reverse this. The most obvious attractions, those which jump at us in vivid magazines, posters, and advertisements, must create a real discipline of life—or we will never get any farther. The boy or girl who becomes accustomed to all sorts of physical stimulations on a date is cheating himself (herself) of the chance to grow together during the courtship period.

In growing up together, certain real concerns should be explored. First, boy and girl should share their ideas and aims on each other's real reason for life—occupation, plans for the future, Vocation. In this discussion they should find out those interests which are very much alike. A

certain number of these are necessary if two people are not to grow apart. At the same time they must explore where their interests differ, for a certain number of these are necessary if two people are to stay together. Two persons need places where they can withdraw to themselves even within marriage.

Naturally, the subject of the family, how many children, and what place they shall have in the vocation of the girl must be discussed. In the life of the family, husband and wife just have to do certain things together if children are to be moulded by family life: leading in family devotions, going to church together, celebrating family and church holidays together, common aims for vacation periods, similar ideas of family recreation.

As the process of getting to know one another progresses, there will be times when the face that each has put on for the other may suddenly slip—and in a sudden outburst one may reveal what he does when he is tired. This sudden revelation of how he really is might be painful, but it is also material for judging whether you can cope with him as he is. Married life is largely concerned with just this. It's no wonder people talk of married people as "settling down."

Though we must get to know each other well, we must very carefully keep ourselves from prying too deeply into the secret natures of our beloved. A Christian believes that there is a secret place in each person, walled-in his 'closet' which he may reveal only to God, but within which there arises the power of a renewal of life. We should treat every person with this sense of mystery, as though we are always were learning, and fine things might be revealed in our beloved at any moment. To treat someone as though you knew everything there is to know about him is to treat him as a thing, not as a person.

But really this mystery of the other person lies at the very heart of all happy marriages—at the other end of your endeavors. Right now you have to get to know one another, what you believe in, and how each considers his life unde-

God. This means conversations on those dates, quarrels as well as agreements.

These quarrels and disagreements are the easiest things for "lovers" to avoid. It's always easy to be moody and to say, "Darling, let all that stuff go! Just come a little closer." And soon all of these bothersome affairs—like differences of hopes and of meaning in life—melt in the heat of an embrace. "We love each other and that's all that counts," usually means we are physically attracted to this particular female, and this is enough for the whole of life. It might be a good formula if men and women were only a step from the animal world.

Yet as Christians, we believe that God has called us to the highest life of devotion to each other, and to the generation which is to follow. He has called us to be fellow creators in the object of his creation—the Kingdom of God. And of all places in life, marriage and the family is where our part in this creation is our individual privilege and our common responsibility.

I'm not sure how a girl would treat a young Christian fellow who evidently carries the weight of this responsibility into every date. It would be such a novel experience that she would probably recommend that he see a psychiatrist. Sometimes a martyr can be so busy carrying his cross that he doesn't bother about the neighbor for whom the cross is borne. Obviously, we don't mean that!

There is a deep love and affection for the other person which makes one yearn for the very best development of her Christian responsibility too. Where this is truly present, boy and girl really have something to talk about.

In all we have had to say, we have postponed the part of dating which is usually thought of first—the gradual attempts to know the other sex, and ourselves, by trial and error. This postponement was not due to any belief that the physical side of sex is evil. The truest strain of our Christian tradition emphasizes that sex was created by God, and it is good. The relationship of man and woman in marriage is the most wonderful

relationship between persons in God's creation.

But like all of the highest experiences of man, a perversion of this experience can throw one to the depths. It is no accident that in *Pilgrims Progress*, when the traveller reaches the gate of heaven, he just misses stepping into a trap-door that would have thrown him directly to hell. The author is pointing out the dangers of the best.

With all of your newly found physical feelings pulling you two together, yet with the knowledge that sexual relationships outside of marriage are impossible of deep fulfillment, you are really in a situation which tries the depths of your Christian love, faith and hope. And each date is really a test. The uncertainties of education, military service, and getting started in an occupation further complicate the situation, and remove any clear-cut purpose which could steady the ship. In the midst of these currents, you won't find many young people who can stand it. The conversation of your friends may be full of suggestive gossip about those who are having their free-for-all. In five years time, the stamp of regret will be marked on their foreheads.

In the midst of this a certain Spartan discipline is demanded in favor of higher aims for a happy married life. One no longer needs to "experiment" in order to find out the "facts of life." There are plenty of good books which will tell you all about the physical relationship of man and woman.

But you do need to "experiment" in the deeper part of courtship—in digging into each other's *reason for life and purpose under God*. No books can do this for you. In many ways you can't even do it for yourself. That other person is the one who will test your faith, and hope and love, and out of the common faith, of both together will come something much better, for you, the world, and the world to come.

PRESENTATION POINTERS

It is understandable that youth should look at boy-girl relations as immediate problems without thought of the consequences of action. The topic attempts to raise our sights, and set these relations within a framework of the whole of life. It is hoped that every Luther leaguer will have a chance to read the article. It might be summarized by these statements:

1. Marriage can be either heaven or hell on earth.

2. Marriage is not necessary for deep happiness.

3. A happy marriage is a process of developing human personalities.

4. This mutual development must start during courtship if it is to happen in marriage.

5. The physical "mechanics" of the relationship, new and over-powering to youth, are easily mastered by partners who enter this deeper development together. Therefore preoccupation with this part of the relationship before marriage, is both foolish and damaging to deeper understandings.

6. The courtship period provides the one opportunity of getting started in mutual development.

Any one of these points may be discussed. However, the following suggestions are made for possible use:

a. Assign to three leaguers the duty of coming to the meeting with an outline of three "love stories" in current magazines, or movies. Discuss them against the background of the article.

b. Assign to three other leaguers the duty of interviewing three couples in the congregation (or families) whose marriages appear to be "ideal." Ask them for advice in finding a lifemate. Discuss.

c. Discuss the "embarrassments" in dating, allowing free rein to leaguers' expression. Have them write questions on slips of paper and then draw the slips out of a box, so the questions will remain 'anonymous.'

d. Discuss the changes that seem to affect young people today in early marriages. What would youth tell their parents? Keep notes and actually ask for a report to a parents' class. Prepare for a report from the parents' class to a later meeting of the league.

e. What are the different tasks of the man and woman in family life? What training would you consider necessary for both before marriage?

f. What should two young people consider important to learn about each other in a dating relationship?

SUGGESTIONS FOR WORSHIP

The following hymns are suggested as excellent choices for actual use in a marriage service. Hymns: CSB 505, Our God, Our Help in Age Past

CSB 283, Now Thank We All Our God
CSB 345, The King of Love My Shepherd

CSB 382, Take My Life
CSB 276, Love Divine, All Love Excelling

Psalms 67 and 128 are proper for a wedding. Why? Use for Scripture reading the three passages in the Order for Marriage. (p. 265 CSB) starting "The Lord God Said . . .")

Use for prayer the Collect for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity, CSB p. 95. Why?

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COLORS WITH A PURPOSE

by Charles Trexler, Jr.

ONCE THERE were three small boys who liked to play hooky from church. They lived near a good fishing stream and the fish seemed to bite better on Sunday morning than any other time. When the boys' father suspected they were not going to church he started asking them what the sermon was about. These fishermen had a good imagination and became very adept at making up a sermon on the spot. Since the father attended an earlier service he tried asking them about the color of the altar vestments. But the boys licked this problem too. One was chosen to go to church and he tipped off the other two at the fishing hole afterwards. They went back home with a colorful story every Sunday.

A lot of people are conscious that the colors on the altar change from time to time. Many of them think it's for the sake of variety or because the different colors 'look pretty'. But there's a very definite symbolism connected with the colors you see in church every Sunday morning. Before psychology was invented the church understood that various colors have different psychological effects on people. No hospital would think of painting its patients' rooms a bright red because red is a disturbing color. Christians need to be disturbed sometimes especially when we celebrate the days of the great heroes of the Christian faith. The liturgical color is red on those days not only to recall to our memory the blood that was shed by these saints but to 'disturb' us to follow in the path of their self-sacrifice. We use red on the Feast of Pentecost as a remembrance of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples in the form of flames of fire and to remind us that we need to be 'disturbed' enough about our faith to be on fire with it.

Violet, or purple, is a color which has the opposite effect of red. It calls to mind, during Advent and Lent, the two penitential seasons of the church year, the humiliation of our Lord in taking upon himself our human flesh and his sufferings "under Pontius Pilate". It reminds us when we enter the church that we need to repent of our own sinfulness in order to celebrate with a true heart the feasts of Christmas and Easter. Black is a sister of purple and reflects less light than any other color. It is associated with death and suffering. Good Friday is the only day it is used in the Church Year.

Green is the color of growing things. It is used during the Trinity Season. This half of the Church Year is devoted to the study of the

teachings of the Resurrected Christ. Our celebration of Easter is meaningless unless we grow in the Risen Christ into Whom we have been baptized.

White reflects more light than any other color. It is used on the great feasts of Christmas and Easter and on Epiphany. It symbolizes the dazzling purity of the Blessed Trinity and reminds us that the lives of Christians are to be "perfect, even as your father in heaven is perfect." This white perfection is ours only through Christ who is for us "forgiveness of sins, life and salvation".

The three small boys who liked to fish on Sunday morning—and their father—worked out quite a strategy and counter-strategy. There's a plan, too, in the liturgical colors used in your church on the various days of the Church Year.

PRESENTATION POINTERS

This is a good topic to use to refresh your league's memory about the different seasons of the Church year. Ask your pastor to be on hand to explain and answer any questions that might come up about liturgical colors and vestments during the discussion period. List on the blackboard the progression of seasons in the Church year, and have the leaguer presenting the topic add the appropriate color in chalk besides the seasons and festivals as he talks. Perhaps your pastor would be willing to show the league some of the different vestments he wears at different times during the year and explain the symbols embroidered on them. Do you think that the careful selection of the different colors is important? Are the colors important in themselves, or because they teach us something or remind us of something? What do the colors tell us about the development of the Church year? What significance does the Green of Trinity season have for Christians? How does the Church year help Christians grow in their faith? What colors does your pastor wear for weddings, funerals? Perhaps he would explain why he chooses these colors.

WORSHIP OUTLINE

Introit: The Spirit of the Lord filleth the world, alleluia: let the righteous be glad, let them rejoice before God; yea, let them exceedingly rejoice. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Hymn: Jesus with thy Church Abide SBH 153

Lesson: Read responsively Psalm 67

Gospel: John 16:12-15

Gloria Patri

Offering

Doxology and prayer

Topic

Hymn: The Church's One Foundation SBH 149

Prayer: O God, whose beloved Son ministered to men in the market place and in the country, by the hearth and in thy holy House: We beseech thee to bless us who are gathered in thy Name. Help us to learn and to do thy will. Guide us by thy Spirit; comfort us with the sense of thy presence; and let our life and fellowship be to the praise of thy Name and the advancement of thy kingdom; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Remember that there are prayers available for your use in the SBH.



LEAGUE IN BUSINESS

by E. J. Cornils

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"MR. CHAIRMAN, I think we better do something to make some money," Sally said. "June reported our League is about broke."

"We haven't made any money in a long time," Ed observed. "How about a play or an ice cream social or something?"

"Plays and socials are nothin'. They take too long for what you get," Jim said. "Let's set up a car wash behind the church some Saturday and make some *real* dough."

"At a dollar and a half a car we should make enough to do something big for the church," June agreed.

"We should be doing something for the church," said Sally, "but don't forget the League convention next summer. That will cost like everything."

And so another League was in business again.

They did well at it too. On the designated Saturday the Leaguers were all behind the church with hoses, cloths, kerosene, and whisk brooms. They washed, polished, and swept cars belonging to fathers, uncles, friends and neighbors. They even washed the pastor's car free of charge.

They were very enterprising about it too. When business fell off in the early afternoon, several shouted "car wash" to drivers passing by. A couple of others went from door to door in the neighborhood urging persons to patronize the church with the "best car wash in town."

When they finished late that afternoon nobody knew for sure how much they had made. They just knew their treasury was in good shape again. They had made money! They were a success!

But were they a success? I frankly wonder what the filling-station and car-wash operators thought of this success when they counted their day's receipts after this raid on their cash registers by unfair competition.

Can shouting "car wash" to passing motorists and advertising *the church* in the neighborhood as the best car-washing agency—can this be counted as "success"? Was it successful to the point that these neighbors and drivers came to worship the next day? Or is a venture a success simply because it results in dollars for the organizational treasury?

True, people are amazingly tolerant about such approaches by church organi-

zations. They generally support them willingly. I wonder, though, if it doesn't eventually occur to an alert member or prospect that the church is out to take him for all it can get.

An unreasonable conclusion? Not a bit. Let me concoct a typical situation.

As a member of a congregation I make the usual Sunday contributions at worship. Periodically I am invited to contribute to special projects and appeals. This I do willingly.

As a member of one or more church organizations I am required to pay monthly dues to remain in good standing. (The more modern version of the dues system is, of course, the free-will offering. Not only is this system more modern, it is becoming more popular, perhaps because more money results by this procedure.)

But then comes the real shakedown. Fellow members, from this organization or that, intent on doing "church work," confront me as I attend church functions. They have tickets for plays and bowling parties, bean feeds, fish fries, barbecues and what-have-you's. I am confronted with the omnipresent Birthday Bank, leftover bazaar items; "Help the Starving Armenian" projects, and who knows what else?

In the face of all these, can I help but conclude the church and her organizations are in business to give me the business?

Please understand I am not against giving or Christian fellowship or doing things for the church and, through her, for other people. My dispute is with the idea that a church organization *must make money*, that its success is measured by the number of dollars it handles. I am against "doing things for the church" if those things dissipate my energies on non-essentials.

In my understanding, the task of the church is to preach the law and love of God. She is to teach "all that I have commanded you." She is to help the needy, whatever their lot, wherever their need, in Christ's name.

As members of the church, we know that her tasks are ours. The first priority on our time and energies should be direct-

ed into basic church service. We are to serve as evangelists, teachers, choir singers, organization officers, visitors at institutions, etc. It is my contention that all too often organizations have drained away so much time, talent and treasures on money-making schemes that there isn't the strength, time or desire to do the real job that needs doing.

Nor does my judgment sandbag and eliminate as unnecessary the organizations of the church. I see the organizations made noble by serving as the armory of the church. Here is where the needed manpower is mustered for essential service. Here is where the battle plans are reviewed and rehearsed to make possible a victorious campaign. Here is where the weapons are supplied and the armor fitted to the Christian soldier who is to go "Onward."

"But," you remind me, "let's be practical. It takes *money* to preach, teach, and help. Since it takes money—lots of it—the organizations try to supply some of it."

It's true that much money is needed. But just because there's much sickness does everyone have to become a doctor? Why not let the doctors take care of it? By the same token, if the congregation needs money, shall not the congregation arrange for it? Why not have the congregation, through the giving of its own people, provide the money in the way and in the amount God suggests, and be done with it? It will be fairer certainly, and more God pleasing.

God knows what work He wants the church to do. He knows how expensive it is. To get it done he doesn't suggest that all members whip up a storm by selling tickets for something to everybody. His suggestion is simply: "Review your blessings, then out of love and gratitude regularly, prayerfully, intelligently, bring me an offering that will evidence your love and your faith."

If every member did this the problem of church financing would be solved.

It should be said that normally the Luther League is not as much at fault as

is the adult portion of the congregation—for two reasons:

1. Money-raising by the youth group (and by other organizations too) is made necessary by *the failure of the congregation as a whole* to provide.

2. Luther Leagues resort to getting their funds by copying *the methods used in the adult organizations*, which have in this case set youth an extremely bad example with their bake sales, bazaars and lutefisk dinners.

Admittedly, organizations may need some income. If they are to serve as working arms of the main body they will have expenses. What is the source of their income—if dues, money-making schemes, even offerings are eliminated?

This question has been answered by a number of efficient congregations. These congregations have set up a complete program which involves all members and organizations. They know what they want to accomplish. They know the persons and organizations needed to make it possible. They also know what the *total* parish program will cost.

At this point the governing board, in consultation with the organizations, reviews what the role of each organization is to be. This board is then able to determine what finances the organization will need to fulfill its role.

It is the responsibility of the Finance Committee to design a program which interprets the job to be done by the church and encourages members to support it by giving as Scripture suggests.

In this procedure the *unity* of the congregation is upheld, the quantity of appeals is lessened, the need for begging is eliminated, and the membership of the congregation and her organizations can work effectively at causes which should be prime concerns. And your League is then free to get out of the racket of money-making thru commercialized schemes.

The procedure is different? True. It may be considered radical? Perhaps. But the "different" and even the "radical" are sometimes the very things that, if tried properly, result in better results and greater satisfaction.

PRESENTATION POINTERS

The beginning of this article can be presented as a skit. Have the leaguer leading the topic stand in the front, busying himself with "last minute preparations". A girl in the group seated should then stand and begin "Mr. Chairman . . ." Give the short skit and then continue with the reading of the article. Ahead of them prepare a blackboard or large signs with the five questions evaluating fund-raising projects which are listed at the end of the LLA guiding Statement on Commercialism for Luther Leagues. Have on hand extra copies of the Guiding Statement so they can be referred to during the discussion. Another article on commercialism (including a skit) appeared in the December issue of LUTHER LIFE entitled "Christmas and Commercialism." Points for discussion could be lifted from this source also. Begin the discussion with comments from leaguers on the purpose of the Christian Church. (The New Testament says that we are to preach Christ.) Are the financial undertakings mentioned in the article in keeping with this purpose? Evaluate each by asking the five questions at the end of the Guiding Statement. What is the definition of Christian Stewardship? An

explanation of the Guiding Statement is now available from LLA, 2900 Queen Lane, Philadelphia 29, Penna. for 15 cents.

WORSHIP OUTLINE

HYMN: Son of God, Eternal Saviour, SBH 542.

PSALM: Read responsively Psalm 24.

GLORIA PATRI

SCRIPTURE: 2 Cor. 8:1-9

OFFERING

DOXOLOGY AND PRAYER

HYMN: Lord Speak to Me, SBH 538

TOPIC

HYMN: We Give Thee But Thine Own, SBH 544.

PRAYER: O God, who in thine infinite love hast entrusted to us both the knowledge of thy truth and the gifts of thy bounty: help us to use them as good stewards, giving liberally, praying constantly, and working diligently, that we may share in bringing all men to thy truth and in hastening the coming of thy kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CLIMATE FOR COMMITMENT

by Carroll L. Wessinger

Originally presented by St. John's Luther Leaguers, Springfield, Ohio, at Ohio Convention Rally.

I. General Purpose of Dialogue

- A. To show that within the Church there is a perfect climate for commitment. The symbols that are to be used are: the church, baptism, confirmation, Lord's Supper, worship or Word, prayer, church schools, Luther League, marriage, and death.
- B. To lead young people to acknowledge or take advantage of the opportunities for true commitment within the church.

II. The Meaning of "Climate" in the Dialogue

Climate meaning in the sense **any** prevailing conditions affecting life and activity. The church provides the prevailing conditions affecting the spiritual and eternal destiny of man.

III. Personnel Needed for the Dialogue

- A. A boy and a girl who are excellent speakers and who will change intermittently from first speaker to second speaker.
- B. Ten Leaguers to hold posters with symbols painted on them.
- C. A projectionist if slides are used.

IV. Props

- A. Ten poster cards, or slides, displaying the symbols listed above furnish the visual effect. If posters are used, the backs of the posters may spell out "Christians." (10 letters and 10 symbols)

V. The Dialogue—"Climate for Commitment"

FIRST SPEAKER: (Symbol — Church) Many young people have the idea today that if you want "to get religion," as the old expression goes, you must go to a tent revival or visit a crusade service held by an evangelist.

SECOND SPEAKER: But let us look at *how* our own church furnishes a climate for commitment. We do not want to think of climate as the weather conditions of some section of America, but climate in the sense of any prevailing conditions which affect our life and activity.

FIRST SPEAKER: The church beyond a doubt provides the prevailing spiritual conditions which affect our lives, such as through the Word and Sacraments, church school, and Luther League. The church is the workshop of the Holy Spirit, and, as such, the church appropriates to us the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Within the fellowship of our own congregation and through its activities, we are given many opportunities not only to commit our lives to Christ, but also to know *why* we are committing them to Him.

SECOND SPEAKER: Now let us look at how the church provides climate for commitment.

FIRST SPEAKER: (Symbol — Tongues of Fire or Dove) Baptism is a Sacrament, and, as such, it is the doorway into the church. Through baptism we are received into the church. Baptism is in every sense the work of God. It is God who gives and it is we who receive at baptism. God saves man by giving. Man is saved by receiving. The whole Christian Gospel is sacramental; that is, God comes to claim us as His own children.

SECOND SPEAKER: Baptism is a means of God's giving, the channel Christ has chosen for giving His Kingdom to us. He wants infants, too, in His Kingdom. "Let the children come to me and do not hinder," He says. "Whosoever does not receive the Kingdom like a child shall not enter it." "Go therefore into all nations, baptizing them . . ." When we are baptized "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," we are branded the property of God. We are adopted children of God through the grace of Christ that comes to us even while we are infants. Since it is God who does the work in Baptism, it is not necessary for us at the time to fully understand Christ. It is necessary only that we, with open minds and willing hearts, await a fuller understanding of the faith.

FIRST SPEAKER: (Symbol — A Hand on a Head) Christ continues to come to us during the years in which we prepare ourselves for church membership. Confirmation of our baptismal vows becomes one of the major highlights of our life within the church. During that exciting period in which we are known as teenagers, we begin to attend catechetical instruction. We attend many hours and learn about God's Will and Way which is revealed in the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Sacrament of Baptism, and the Sacrament of the Altar. In these classes we learn what the Christian faith is all about, and as a climax to our diligent study in confirmation class, we are confirmed in the faith. This means that for the first time we are privileged to receive the Lord's Supper.

SECOND SPEAKER: But the important thing that confirmation offers us as a climate for commitment is the fact that we confirm the faith in which most of us were baptized many years before. In confirmation we say, "Yes, I believe," to what our parents and the congregation said on our behalf when we were baptized as infants. So confirmation opens the door to the Lord's Supper and to all the spiritual privileges of membership in the church of Christ. It is truly a time for commitment.

FIRST SPEAKER: (Symbol — A Chalice) Once we have been confirmed into the membership of the church, we are now able to enjoy the greatest experience that the church offers, namely, that of communing in a special way with Jesus Christ. In the Lutheran Church we believe that Christ is truly present in the Sacraments—that "in, with, and under" Christ comes to us through the bread and wine. Communion is an important part of our Christian life and offers us the climate for commitment in that we really meet the Lord Jesus Christ.

SECOND SPEAKER: Since this is life's greatest experience, it is an appointment with God which we shall never want to miss. In the Lord's Supper, Christ comes all the way—He is present personally. He gives—His Body and His Blood. He says to each individual ". . . given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." So through the Lord's Supper, we enter into the very presence of Christ Himself who says to us, "I give Myself." We, in turn, say the same in commitment, "I give myself."

FIRST SPEAKER: (Symbol --- Altar and Church Nave) Another one of the great spiritual blessings of the church is worship. Worship is a giving and a receiving. We give our praise, thanksgiving, offering and our lives to God. We receive from God His Word. Through the preached Word the Holy Spirit works in our hearts and lives, leading us to an understanding of God's Will, and offering to us a climate for commitment to Him.

SECOND SPEAKER: As we hear the Word of God preached, we hear God's Will for our lives and in turn receive guidance and help in carrying out His Will. We believe through worship, as we receive the sermon, sing our praises, and offer our contrite hearts, our lives receive the grace which comes to us through the Gospel.

FIRST SPEAKER: No, we are never spectators in worship. It is God who watches our hearts respond or reject His blessing of salvation. In worship we are offered the opportunity to commit our lives to Christ, or to omit Him from our lives.

SECOND SPEAKER: (Symbol — Folded Hands) Since God is our Heavenly Father, prayer is as natural as conversation between children and earthly parents. Prayer is a joyful sharing of life and thought and desire. Our parents expect us to talk over our wants and our thoughts with them. Moreover, parents expect us to converse on our own level. This is the same natural way in which God wants us to talk with Him.

FIRST SPEAKER: As children before the Heavenly Father, we can better understand the purpose, nature and content of prayer. Doesn't a wise father withhold certain things from his child? So does God. Doesn't an understanding parent anticipate his child's needs, even to the point of knowing them before the child mentions them? So does God. Doesn't the parent expect the child's conversation to include more than badgering for favors? So does God. As a wise earthly father deals with his children, so God deals with us.¹ Prayer is our way of not only asking God, but it is also a way of being receptive to His Will.

SECOND SPEAKER: As a part of true prayer, we must beg that we may become humble, and we must confess our mistakes and our sins so that we may be in a right relationship with Him. The only way to learn how to pray is to pray. The Christian Faith offers us, through the language and the channel of prayer, an opportunity to commit ourselves to God. For prayer always has in it the climate for commitment. "I give myself. Thy Will be done."

FIRST SPEAKER: (Symbol — Holy Bible) Besides our worship services offering a climate for commitment, certainly our church school, which we must attend with faithfulness and with regularity. It is in these classes that we are able to study about God's work as Creator of the world, as One who protects and guides us through life, and as One who loves us in Jesus Christ.

SECOND SPEAKER: The purpose of our church schools is to remove the obstacles in our minds so that we may "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." Truly when this climate for commitment is established, then the Holy Spirit can carry out His work of Sanctification. We air our thoughts, problems, and even our doubts about the Christian faith, and in our church schools we learn the answers. As we study and as our minds are stimulated to think about the work of God, we are not only given a chance to commit ourselves to Christ, but also to acquire knowledge of the responsibilities and privileges of discipleship.

FIRST SPEAKER: (Symbol — Luther's Coat of Arms) As we attend Luther League, we are reminded that through it we are offered another warm climate for commitment. With our five-point program of Christian vocation, evangelism, missions, social action, and recreation, we are provided with almost everything the church has to offer. Through the many functions and activities of our Luther Leagues, we are given a chance to learn more about Christ and about what true Christian fellowship is as we study, worship, pray, and laugh together. We have the opportunity to be Christians who are dedicated to the work of His Church. Luther League is our opportunity not only to enjoy the privileges of the Church, but also to give ourselves in commitment to the mission of Christ's Church.

SECOND SPEAKER: (Symbol — Wedding Ring) As we grow to maturity in our worship and our study in the church, we take on adult responsibilities in life. One of the great steps toward adulthood in any person's life is marriage. Even in the marriage service, which itself is an act of worship, we, as Christians, are given an opportunity again to commit ourselves to Christ. For certainly in the vows that are taken, we cannot help but commit ourselves to carrying out God's Will.

FIRST SPEAKER: We say in the marriage service that "what God has joined together, let no man put asunder." Through marriage two people become one as they carry out a command of God. Marriage gives us the opportunity to grow into a Christian family. Christian marriage begins and prospers in the worshipping community of the Church, and as we enter into marriage in the future years, we will know that we are committing ourselves to the great laws of God governing this Holy Estate.

SECOND SPEAKER: (Symbol — a Lily and a Cross) While we are young, we wish we could be old, and when we grow old, we wish that we could be young again. From the very time we are born we are moving toward the end of our lives in this world. The church offers its greatest blessing in life at the point of death. For it is in this hour that all of our lives as Christians culminate in a final act of giving ourselves to God. The New Testament is founded upon the fact that Christ rose again from the dead. Because we live in Him, we shall also receive the eternal life which He has worked out for us upon the Cross and in the Tomb of the Resurrection.

FIRST SPEAKER: Death for the Christian, therefore, is not the end, but the beginning. It is not a closed door, but an open door whereby we continue our life in Christ to eternity. Our lives become everlastingly united with God our Creator and Redeemer. Through this door of life we find the glory of our commitment to Christ as our Lord and Saviour.

FIRST SPEAKER: This is why we have the church. We have a Master and are committed to Him. It is very easy for us to conform to the activities of the church; it is convenient to just take life as it goes along; it is very easy for us to grow within the Luther League, enjoying its parties and activities—but we must always remember that commitment is *not* a matter of conformity or non-conformity. Commitment gives us something above and beyond these—a reason to live—a goal and a mission in life.

SECOND SPEAKER: We are Christians here today because we realize that it is Christ who matters most in life. That if we are not committed to Christ, we are like a house built upon the sand, or like a straw caught in the winds. The worst thing that can happen to us in life is to be without a Master; to become slaves to our own selves. But in Christ, who offers us not *a* way of life, but *The* Way of Life, we find our Master. When we

are totally committed to Him, life takes on new purpose. (Pause)
If you are ready, commitment to Christ can take on new meaning for you right here, right now. Christ is calling yet—to commitment: What will your answer be? (Pause for about one minute.)

Let us pray:

Our Father God, we beg that Thou would hear us and receive us as we commit our lives to Thee through the merits of Thy Son, and our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

*Material from "Growth in Grace." Wm. M. Horn.

PRESENTATION POINTERS

This is a good chance to invite another league or young people's group or your parents to visit your program. Follow the introductory directions closely. Give yourselves plenty of time to rehearse, even though you may decide to have each of the parts read and not memorized.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Ask leaguers the following questions and list the answers on a blackboard. (You may have more than one answer for each.) **Where** is your church? How often does your church meet? **Where?** What does your church do? (The answers you may get are the building on such and such a street, Sunday morning two or three times and in the evening, etc.) The point of this little quiz is to illustrate how narrow our conception of the Church has become. What do these answers have to do with the Church as the New Testament pictures it? the Body of Christ? Your Church is wherever those who accept Christ may be. Part of your church is at Luther league when this program is being given, part of your Church is working at its daily tasks, studying, operating a bus or train, caring for children, working in an office. Your Church doesn't close up shop when the door of your parish building is shut. Your Church is wherever Christ's followers are, and it does whatever you do, working wherever you witness, at home, in school, at the local hangout for your classmates, as well as in your congregational programs. Someone has said that the Church works all week long and then stops for rest and strength in the worship of Sunday morning. How does this compare with our "Sunday Christian" attitudes? What symbol have you used for the first poster or slide? ("The Church") How does this describe your interpretation of the Church? Is there any part of our lives that we should call "spiritual" while other parts are "secular?" Can a real Christian be this kind of "split personality?" How much of our lives is open to the inspection of God? What percentage of our lives should we devote to service of God? Remember that Christians, as the Body of Christ, serve God together in that Body, the Church. The Church is busy all week long, wherever you are.

WORSHIP SUGGESTIONS

Hymn: In Christ There Is No East or West, SBH 342

Epistle: 1 Cor. 12:12-13, 27-31

Scripture: Acts 10:42-48a

Gloria Patri

Topic

Offering and doxology

Hymn: The Church's One Foundation, SBH 149

Prayer: Most gracious Father, we humbly beseech thee for thy holy catholic Church. Fill it with all truth, in all peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where anything is amiss, reform it; where it is right, strengthen and confirm it; where it is in want, provide for it; where it is divided and rent asunder, heal the breaches thereof, O thou Holy One of Israel; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

SCHOOL IS FOR LIFE

by Constance Rugh

To the leader

MARKS do matter in school, particularly to young people who try to carry their Christianity into all parts of their lives. Everyone can't make straight A's on report cards. But then there's A for Effort. Purpose of this topic is to make leaguers consciously and conscientiously rate their own efforts in their school life.

Properties

This meeting can be fun with a little preparation and imagination on the leader's part. You'll need:

1. *A dunce cap* made of a large sheet of heavy paper.
2. *Cardboard spectacles*, easily cut out. They can be crude or fancy.
3. *Teacher's pointer*. Not necessary, but more fun. A yardstick will do.
4. *Report cards* will take the most work to prepare. There must be one for each leaguer present. Use file cards and draw in additional vertical lines. These will be used for self-rating test.
5. *Blackboard* is optional. Leader can put self-rating test on board.
6. *Paper and pencils*—enough for the "class."
7. *Slips with instructions* for buzz groups.

Worship suggestions

HYMN: "Now in the Days of Youth"
CYH 240.

SCRIPTURE: Matt. 25: 14-30 or Romans 12: 3-8.

PRAYER:

O gracious God, we are grateful for our minds, for the ability to think and learn. We thank thee for our schools, our teachers, all who are working to prepare us for life. Help us to take better advantage of our opportunities, so that we can develop the gifts you have given us, in Jesus' name. Amen.

HYMN: "O Thou Whose Feet Have Climber Life's Hill" CYH 258.

The topic

The leader assumes the role of "teacher" throughout the program. Don't be afraid to ham it up a bit at first to get things going. Also don't stick too closely to the suggestions that follow. If you've better ideas, use 'em. If the discussion gets lively, just keep it going on the right track, which is stated in the opening paragraph above.

Introduce yourself as Mr. or Miss _____, teacher for the class. Announce the art lesson.

Art lesson

Pass out paper and pencils. Have each person draw a picture that is symbolic or represents his or her favorite subject in school. Example: A map for geography, a design of notes for music. Time limit for drawing is two minutes. Have leaguers display work and vote on best and worst. Award spectacles to best and dunce cap to worst.

The leader uses the art lesson to introduce some questions that by all rights should lead to a discussion. Here are suggested questions: (Note the word *suggested*. If a discussion gets going after only a couple of questions, don't stick to this list. Prod the leaguers along, but keep them on the right track. Don't let this discussion turn into a gripe or giggle session.)

Questions

1. Ask several leaguers singly if they make their best marks in their favorite subjects.
2. Why should this be, if it is, true?
3. Is it necessary to study a lot on a favorite subject?

4. Does studying something you like seem like work?

5. Do you like to study other subjects, particularly ones that give trouble?

6. Do you like to study?

7. Do you know how to study? How do you study?

8. Are you satisfied to get by or do you want to do your best?

9. Does doing your best mean all A's? What's the point of tests?

10. Do marks matter? If not, what does matter?

Project for the class

When the discussion ends, the leader divides the group into buzz sessions of five or six to work on the projects. Each buzz group discusses their subject among themselves for five minutes and then reports their findings to the whole "class." Following are suggested subjects for buzz sessions:

Friends. Discuss the influence of friends on school work. A gang can be lazy or industrious. They can copy homework or even answers to test questions (perish the thought!) They can try to sandwich studies in between everything else. Take it over from here.

Fun. Studying affects fun, there's no two ways about it. Can you have fun and relaxation with homework hanging over your head? Does God expect you to work all the time or none of the time?

Future. Your future is tied up with what goes on in school. What about the following case?

A friend of mine decided in his senior year in high school to go to college. He eagerly filled out his application for a church college. He was refused admittance. His grades didn't measure up. Then he decided to enlist in the navy and try for photography school, since it was his hobby. He failed again. He just didn't have the educational background. The officers said he might try for radar training, but it was the same old story. He wrote home: "If I had only taken my studies more seriously, I wouldn't have to look forward to swabbing decks for four years. I had a chance at everything, but it's turned out to be nothing."

Feeling of accomplishment. At camp, handcraft is a favorite activity. Most items made take a lot of time and patience. Sometimes campers hurry and try to do something the easy way, to cut corners. Maybe no one will ever be able to tell the difference in the finished project, but the guy or gal will always know and always feel a bit guilty about it. A carefully finished product produces a glow of pride because the maker has done the best possible job. Relate this to school work and marks.

Faith. If faith in God is sincere, then all of life—school included—must be lived as God wants it. School and the life of a student can be a calling of God. Education supposedly prepares us for life and helps us learn to use our talents. Take it over from here.

Self-rating test

After reports from the buzz sessions the leader announces a unique "test" and hands out the "report cards" on which the test will be taken. After taking the test, leaguers rate themselves as follows: Always — 20 points; Sometimes — 10 points; Never — minus 20 points. The "teacher" concludes "class" by telling leaguers to take report cards home and try to improve score during the coming week.

Here is the test:

1. Do you eat a good breakfast before school? (Don't blame Mom for not getting up. You're mature enough to open a cereal box and to mix orange juice.)

2. Do you have a certain time set aside for study? (Ever think of study hall? Some kids I grew up with used to hild over to school early to study.)

3. Do you make sure the light is good? (Be a "bulb snatcher" if necessary.)

4. Do you make sure the room temperature is right? (Best is between 60 and 72 degrees.)

5. Do you get a good night's sleep? (Are 20-year-old movies on TV worth the hangover?)



YOU IN A TUG 'A WAR

by Donald G. Sukosky

TRYING TO MAKE UP your mind can be one of the toughest things in the world to do. This is especially true when you have a major decision at hand. Possible answers tug at every corner. Each one is an option. Some are close to one another—others are miles apart. You stand at the center trying to make up your mind. In many ways it's like being the strand of rope in a tug of war. Sooner or later we have to give in at one end or the other, or else the rope is bound to snap in the tussle.

CONFLICTING DESIRES

Perhaps the reason we have such a rough time in trying to make up our minds is simply the fact that we don't know what we want to begin with. This, of course, lends to the confusion. For the problem isn't simply a matter of finding a few alternatives, but rather choosing between them.

In many respects we are like the two small children who were having the time of their lives on a playground. After having tried every piece of equipment in sight they finally came to the seesaw. One little boy sat at one end and his brother at the other. After they had been going at it for a while, one of the youngsters burst out into bitter sobbing. Thinking that he had hurt himself, his mother went running over and asked, "Johnnie, what's wrong? Have you hurt yourself or something?" "No," the child replied, but pointing his finger at his brother he continued, "I want to go up when he goes up—I want to go down when he goes down."

A rather mighty request, for a seesaw simply doesn't operate that way. The same is true of life. We simply can't have everything we desire. This is the point we don't always understand. It's one cause of our conflicting desires. We just don't realize that a choice in one area often rules out the possible choice in another.

Supposing, for example, you decide that you want to become a medical doctor. The preparation for a career in medicine makes certain demands. Among other things, ability, study and concentration are vital factors. Without these your career is bound to be doomed. If you feel that you want to become a doctor and still lead a carefree life, you can bet your bottom dollar that one or the other may fail. Either you will stick to your guns and study, succeeding in your career, or else you will hop on the social circuit and forget it.

These rules are a part of the life that you and I live. We can't have everything we want. Sooner or later you have to begin shouldering the responsibility of making a choice. And make no mistake about it—it's never easy! There's discipline involved and plenty of it.

THE MAJOR DESIRE

Among the conflicting desires that you and I have to face in life, perhaps the greatest centers smack on our character—the type of person we want to be. Although this is a decision, it isn't one in the usual sense. For even if you decide once and for all the type of person you want to be—every moment of every day involves a new choice. There are a host of smaller decisions that constantly pop up. Each one is directly related to that major desire. You can only achieve that major desire as you make the right choice on the smaller decisions.

Supposing, for example, you decide that you want to be *honest* in character. Assume that this is your top desire. A simple decision doesn't mark the end of your problem. Rather it's but the beginning. From then on, you have a rash of smaller choices, all of which will determine the success of that top desire. For to be honest in character is a desire of the broadest scope. Its impact touches life at every turn. Every moment you have to be on guard, instantly deciding and acting in the face of the most tempting alternatives. They occur no matter where you may be—the temptation to cheat at school; the shirking of responsibilities in the home; cutting corners on an important history assignment. In each instant you must answer *Yes* or *No*. Every answer will be an indication of your character.

To succeed in any decision such as this takes more than a determination on your part. The initial choice is one thing. To live up to it is another. It's this business of "living up to it" that often becomes a stumbling block. The multitude of alternatives pointing to our decision becomes the critical point.

I think it's at this stage that you and I recognize the need of God's strength. We crave a power that will enable us to come to grips with our temptations and finally overcome them. By coming to God often in the daily routines of life you and I receive the inspiration to face each new barrier without hesitation. Regardless of the detours that may turn our paths we are confident that God will lead us to the bridge. It's simply a matter of surrendering ourselves and letting the Master grasp our hand.

Because the temptations of life are constant, our ability to cope with them must be also. This demands a steady flow of strength within our lives. Such strength and inspiration can only be ours as we constantly come to our heavenly Father. This takes, mind you, not just an occasional prayer when the going becomes rough, or a sporadic attendance at Church when the spirit happens to move you, but rather a life which is constantly in tune with God. With this type of a foundation girding us we shall be able to face each new day unafraid, regardless of what it may bring.

While studying in London, Francis Thompson became a victim of the opium habit. He eventually lost all contact with his family. Simply tired with his study, he decided to sell his books. Nights were spent sleeping under the arches or huddled on a park bench on the edge of the Thames River. In this destitute condition he contracted tuberculosis. For weeks he hovered between life and death. One who saw Thompson in this con-

dition described him as a "wretch of a man." He was more ragged and unkempt than an average beggar—no shirt beneath his coat—feet bared by broken shoes.

The doctors said that he could never live. Yet loving hands took hold of him and by the grace of God Thompson did survive. His body became healthy and whole—his mind clear. Then Francis Thompson wrote what many considered to be one of the most inspiring poems in the English language—"The Hound of Heaven."

In this Thompson portrays the persistent power of God that reaches down into the very center of life, remoulding and reshaping the character of man. God is described as the "hound of heaven"—endlessly on our track—His love refusing to let go. This is the same brand of power that can come into your life.

Making up your mind is never easy. But in turning to God your direction is set. In spite of the rash of temptations that try sidetracking your move, you forge ahead. A refreshing power begins to penetrate the center of your life. It's the power of Christ that not only probes you to make a choice, but also gives you the stamina to stick with it.

PRESENTATION POINTERS

The article should be read by one of the members of the League to the entire group. For purposes of discussion it may be divided into two parts as indicated in the two divisions entitled, "Conflicting Desires" and "The Major Desire."

In the first section discussion may center on some of the temptations in life that make it so difficult to come to a decision. Are there any areas in your life in which you have been trying to make up your mind? What about your choice of an occupation. Are you interested in one line of work but run across temptations that lure you into another? Are some of the nobler ambitions of your life sidetracked by an easier way out?

The discussion may then turn to practical ways of coping with temptations in trying to achieve our major desires. How can a foundation for the Christian life be laid? Does prayer really help? Why is it necessary to have regular habits of prayer?

WORSHIP SUGGESTIONS

HYMNS: "Jesus, My Lord, My God, My All" 351 CSB

"O That the Lord Would Guide My Ways" 275 CSB

PSALM 121

PRAYER No. 61 CYH

SCRIPTURE: I Timothy 2:1-7

see special announcement on page 2

LENT

what is important?



THE Holy Season of Lent began when Jesus made it known that he was going to Jerusalem to suffer and die. It was a time of preparation. At first, the Apostle's put aside 40 hours just before the celebration of Easter to prepare spiritually for that day. The time came when these 40 hours was not considered enough, so the time was extended to seven days before Easter known as Holy Week. Years went by—people still felt a need for more time for spiritual preparation, so the time allotted was increased to 40 days—not including Sundays. The Council of Nicea, year 325, officially set aside these 40 days of spiritual preparedness by fasting and repentance. Millions of Christians have found it helpful to spend the 40 days of Lent as a necessity to condition oneself for a meaningful Easter.

For so many people, Easter would just be another Sunday if Lent were not ob-

served. We all feel it necessary and certainly appropriate that we should take time to think about the Passion and Death of Christ. On Ash Wednesday we begin a spiritual pilgrimage to Jerusalem. On this road we travel, we come across a sign that we all have seen—"STOP, LOOK and LISTEN". That, in many ways, describes Lent.

STOP

Lent causes us to STOP—and how we need to do that. School work, play rehearsals, music lessons, dancing, all the club activities. Oh, how busy we all are. We have too much to do, too much to see, too many "jobs" to be done. It is when we ease up physically that we have a chance to grow spiritually. We have rushed our bodies so, that our souls are left behind.

Lent asks us to think of what is really important. It is saying—GOD COME

FIRST. Lent asks for more of our time and effort for God. But how can we find the time for Church, Bible reading and prayer? How can we give up a night for mid-week Lenten Services? For many people life will go on without any change during Lent. But Lent is a time to STOP and Live . . . not just exist. In meditation and solitude during Lent, we find our Life in God.

LOOK

The sign on the road also says LOOK. But we travel so fast that we don't see very much. It's all a blur. But Lent asks us to stop and LOOK.

Take a look at and in yourself. When we honestly do this we can well be ashamed. We see all sorts of evil things. Pride, meanness, selfishness, envy. The sight is not pleasant. It doesn't do much good to look inside and say in a quick general way . . . "I'm a sinner". That's too easy! Lent asks us to be frank about ourselves. We've got to name specific instances. Are WE responsible for the arguments at home or the difficulties at school? Are WE responsible for many of the troubles that we have?

But looking at ourselves only, is not the full answer. Look, also, in another direction. Look at the Cross. As we begin Lent, the Cross on the outskirts of Jeru-

salem seems to be only a speck . . . far away. During Holy Week, we stand at the very foot of the Cross . . . it looms large. There we see the price paid for our salvation.

That is what Lent is for—that we may take a look—a long look at the cross and see on it the Christ who died for us. If we look long enough we will not forget it.

LISTEN

But the familiar sign also says . . . LISTEN. We live in a noisy world. Talk, gossip, radios, television, jets, tires, doors, horns! There is too much noise! Lent says . . . "Keep still, and know that I am God".

One cannot do his best work there is so much noise and confusion . . . even though we all try. As Christians, we must listen to God or die!

When we talk, talk, talk, taking things into our own hands, trying to run our own lives as though God didn't exist . . . then God can't help us. Lent says . . . "Let go . . . be quiet . . . LISTEN." That means prayer, meditation and worship. If we listen, then God, in some way, will let us know what we are to do.

Shall we have time to listen? Are mid-week Lenten Services too much to ask?

It may be difficult, but Lent tells us to STOP, LOOK and LISTEN. Will we?

PRESENTATION POINTERS

This topic is in the form of a meditation to be used at your worship service on the first Sunday of Lent. Choose a leader who is a good speaker to read the meditation, and have him or her practice ahead of time. For your Lenten service, plan to use the Introits, Collects, Graduals and scripture readings listed in the hymnals for the successive Sundays of the season.

This is a good time of the year to take a good look at the worship program of your league. A good beginning would be a change of procedure at the first Lenten service. Open the meeting with prayer and a hymn followed by your regular business session. Then, as the focal point for your meeting, open your worship service with another hymn, the Introit, Gloria,

Collect, Lesson and Epistle, the Gradual and Gospel and then your meditation. End the service with prayer and a final hymn.

On succeeding Sundays other short meditations or discussion sessions could be planned using the three points "Stop", "Look" and "Listen". How can we use our time more effectively in God's service? How can we find time for God in our busy schedules? What part should private devotions play in preparation for Good Friday? What is the real point of Lent anyway? How does Lent make us look at ourselves in different light? Why do people give up "externals" like candy and movies during Lent? Does this kind of Lenten "denial" really provide soil for self-examination? What should we concentrate on

during Lent? Why was it necessary for the Son of God to Die on a cross for us? Why don't we get along with **everybody** at school, students and teachers alike? Is it because they're different from us, or is it because we don't look at them as individuals created by God? Do we frown at young people and adults who get into trouble, or do we ask forgiveness from God for lack of interest or understanding in others' problems, our weakness and inability to speak up for what is just and to do something that would help others? Do we look disgustingly at the drunk on the trolley or the sidewalk, or do we ask forgiveness that we, in our sin of self-satisfaction and self-service, have done nothing to help, in fact have helped make society indifferent, by word and deed? If we don't drink, don't swear, and don't take the name of God in vain, are we necessarily good Christians? How does the look at Christ on the Cross help us to answer these questions? Originally Lent was the period

during which newly-converted Christians were instructed in the Christian faith. Only later did it become also a time during which "lapsed" Christians did penance to put them in good stead with the Church. Which emphasis do you think would be more fruitful for the Church today? What is penance anyway? What did Luther have to say about penance? Ask your pastor to aid you in discussing the meaning of Lent.

PROJECT

A good project for the league would be the preparation of Lenten Scriptural meditations for leaguers or the whole congregation. These could be mimeographed and handed out at the Ash Wednesday service or the first Sunday in Lent. Use the scriptural references listed for the Sunday and Vespers or Matins during Lent. Add a list of sentence prayers for personal or family use.

PEN PALS!

Add these names to your list of new friends:

Miss Elka Schwarting
Weissenburger Str. 15
Bremerhaven 1, Germany

Age: 16. Interested in music, Ricky Nelson, learning the English language and corresponding with an American. Member of Christ Lutheran Church, Bremerhaven, Germany.

Miss Bonita Nitschke
39 Gilbert Street, Berri
South Australia

Bonita will be happy to correspond and introduce you to other South Australian Pen Pals between the ages of 14 and 20.

THE LUTHER LEAGUE OF AMERICA

2900 QUEEN LANE

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Spring!

High Ideals' spring issue will include:

- What Happens at Communion?
- How do we pray?
- Parents and Patience
- Jobs for you in the Church
- Worship in Holy Week
- Commercialism in Luther League
- Christians **Care**
- To Whom Do We Witness?
- What is the Church?
- Do I Have Original Sin?
- Don't Stunt Your Growth!

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